

# Chronic Absenteeism in Arizona: A Description of K-8 Trends 2017-2021

## Presenters:

- **Paul Perrault, PhD, Senior Vice President, Community Impact and Learning, Helios Education Foundation**
- **Lenay Dunn, PhD, Project Director and Senior Researcher, WestEd**

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# Research Questions

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1. What are statewide trends in chronic absence 2017-2021?
2. Which student and school characteristics are most related to chronic absence?
3. What are the preliminary 2021 trends in chronic absence for vulnerable student populations?

# Chronic Absence Definitions

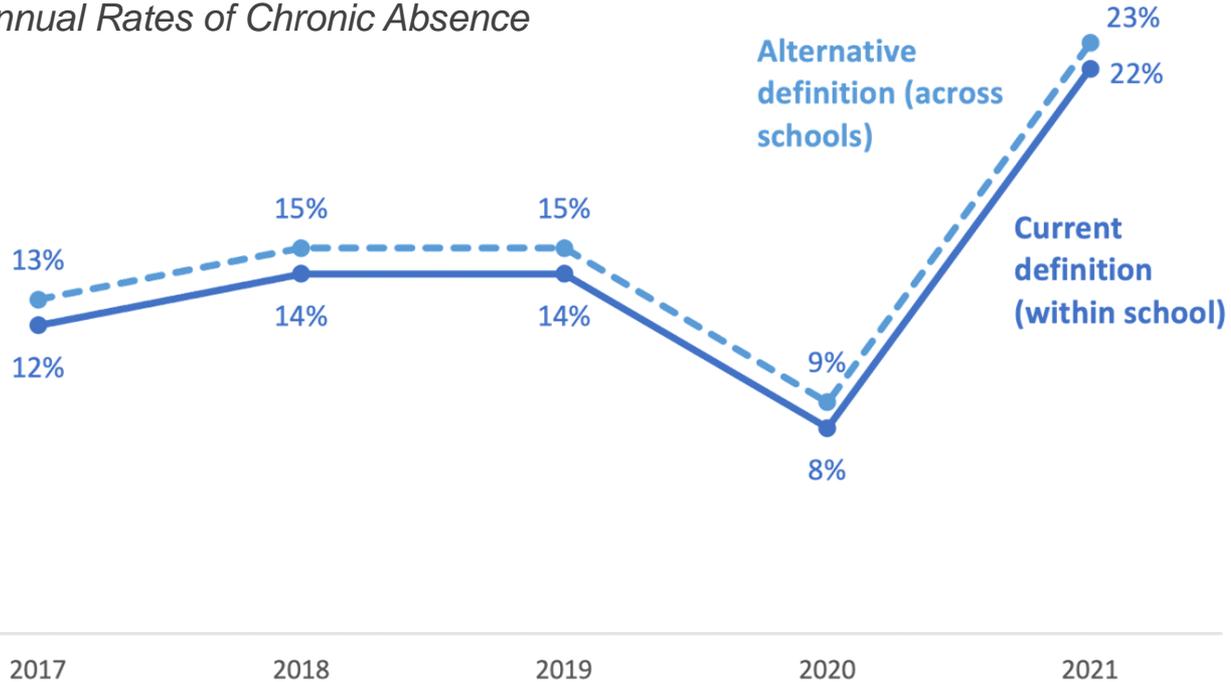
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**Chronic Absence** – In Arizona, for school accountability purposes, chronic absence is when a student is absent from a given school for any reason (excused and unexcused) more than 10 percent of a school’s calendar year (e.g., 18 days for a typical 180-day school year that meets 5 days per week).

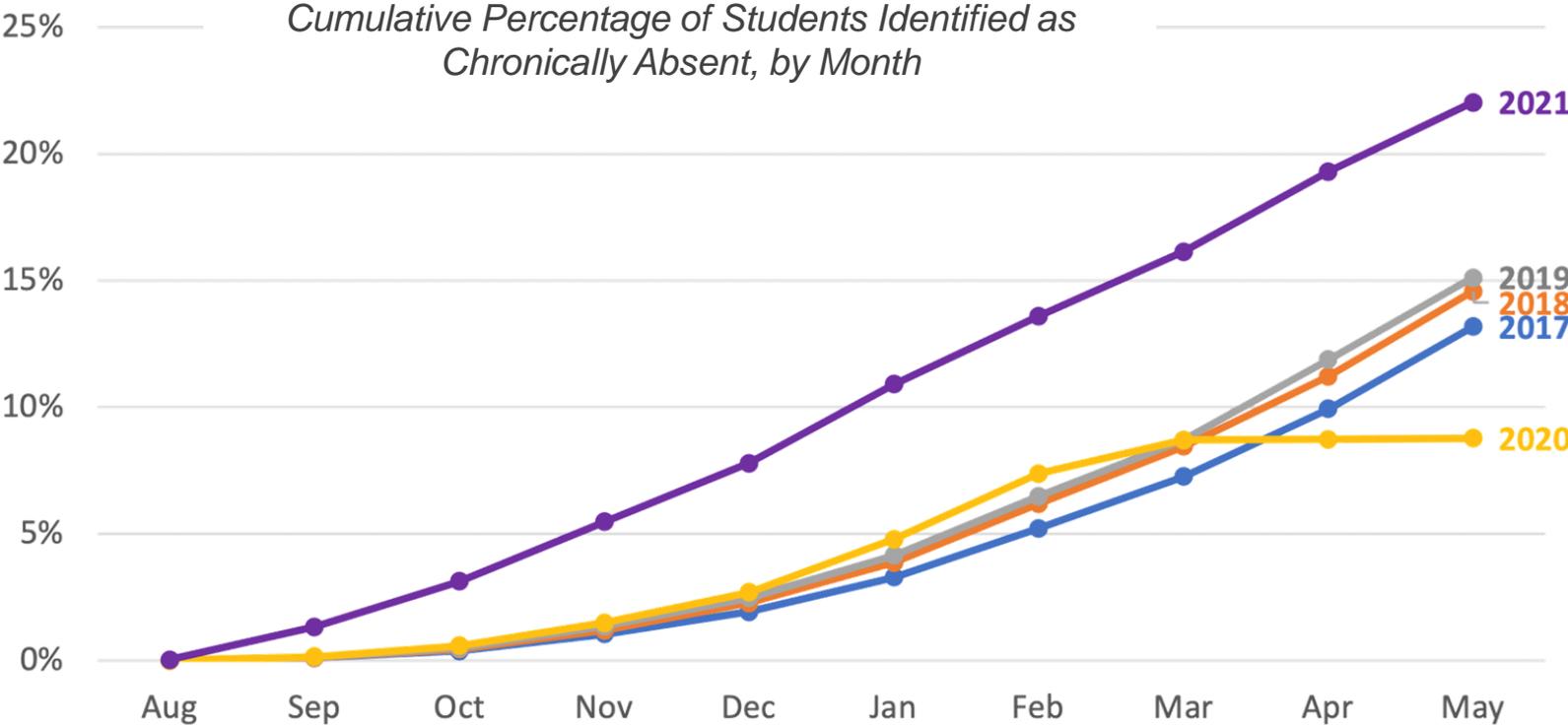
**Alternative Definition of Chronic Absence** – For the purpose of this study, absences (excused and unexcused) were also added across all schools attended by a student in a given school year. A student with absences more than 18 days in a school year was classified as chronically absent.

# The 2021 AZ Chronic Absence Rate Exceeded Pre-Pandemic Levels

*Statewide Annual Rates of Chronic Absence*

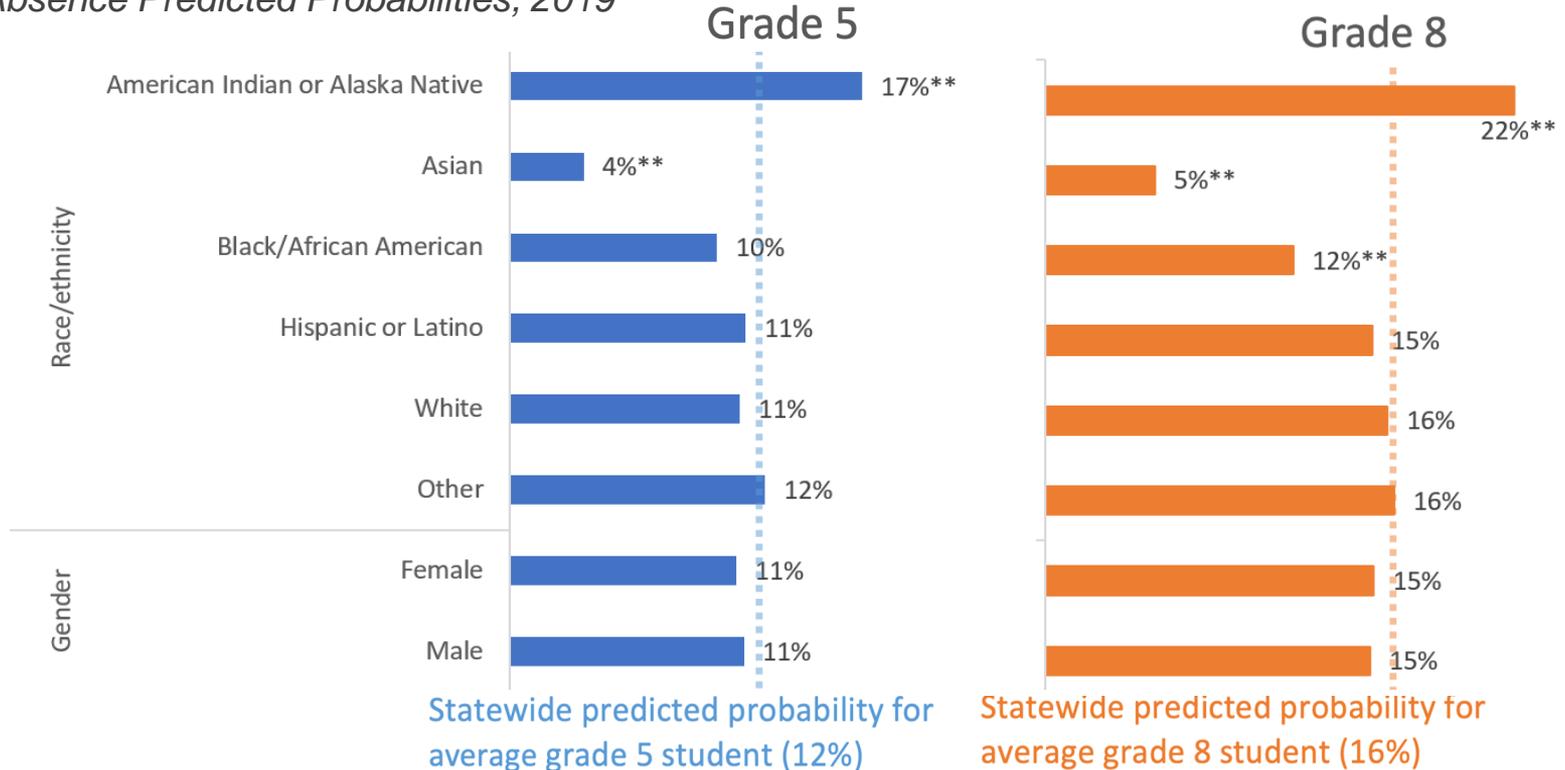


# In 2021, a Higher Percentage of Students Reached the Chronic Absence Cut Off Earlier in the School Year



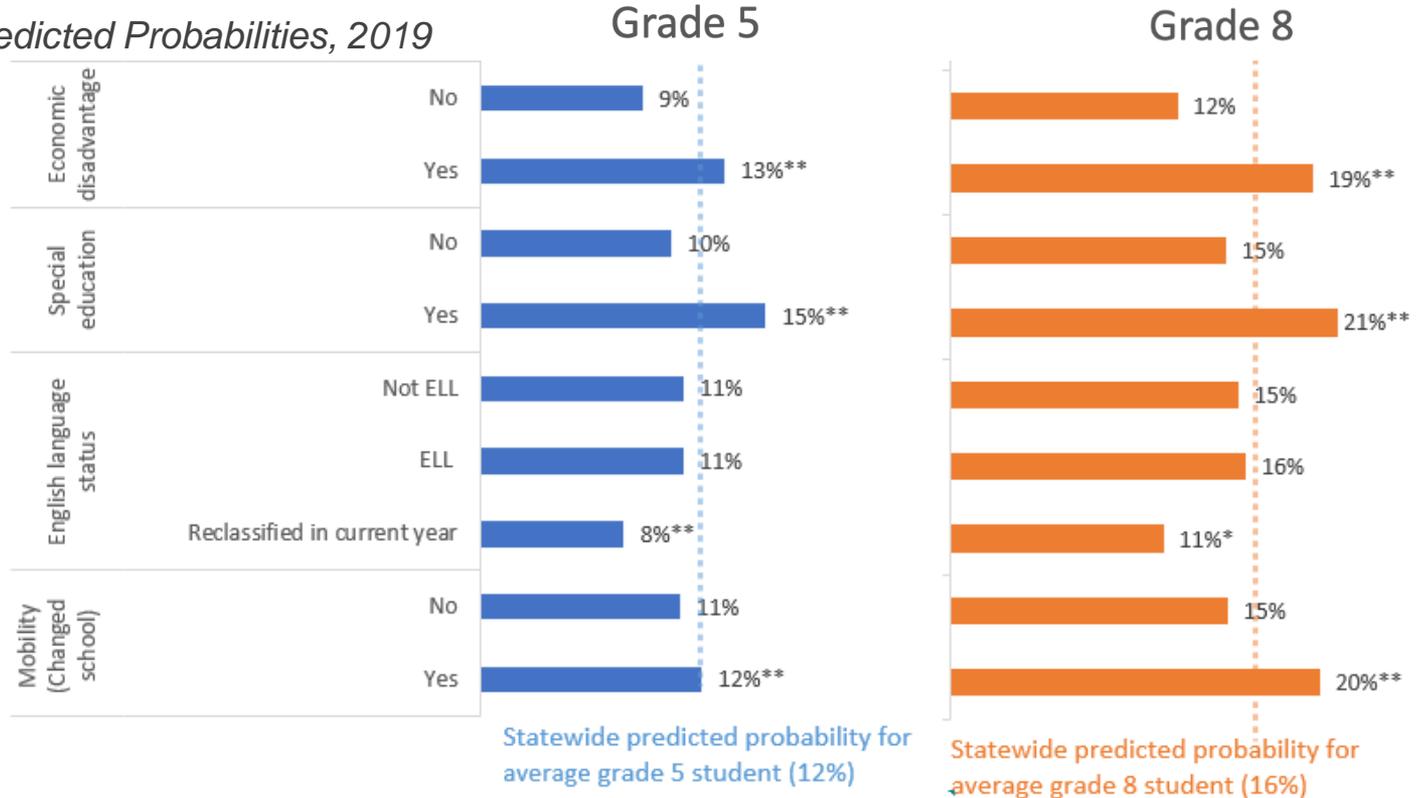
# Before the Pandemic American Indian or Alaska Native Students Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

*Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019*



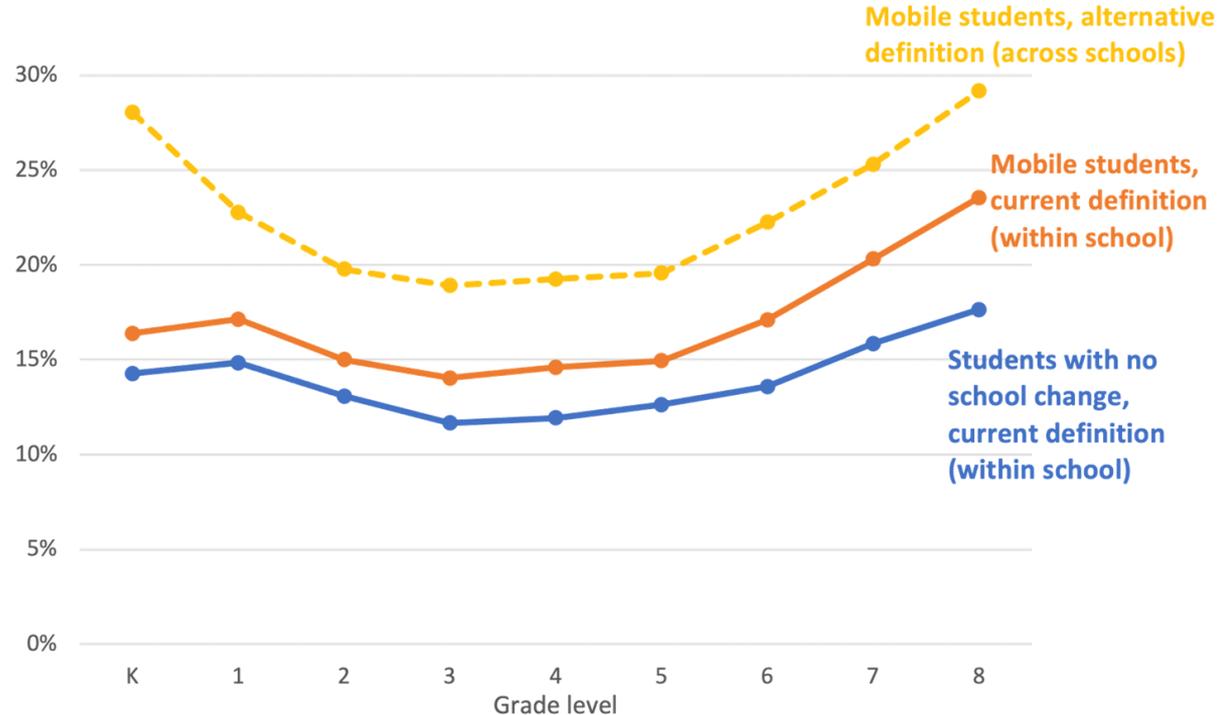
# Before the Pandemic Economically Disadvantaged Students, Special Education Students and Mobile Students Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

*Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019*



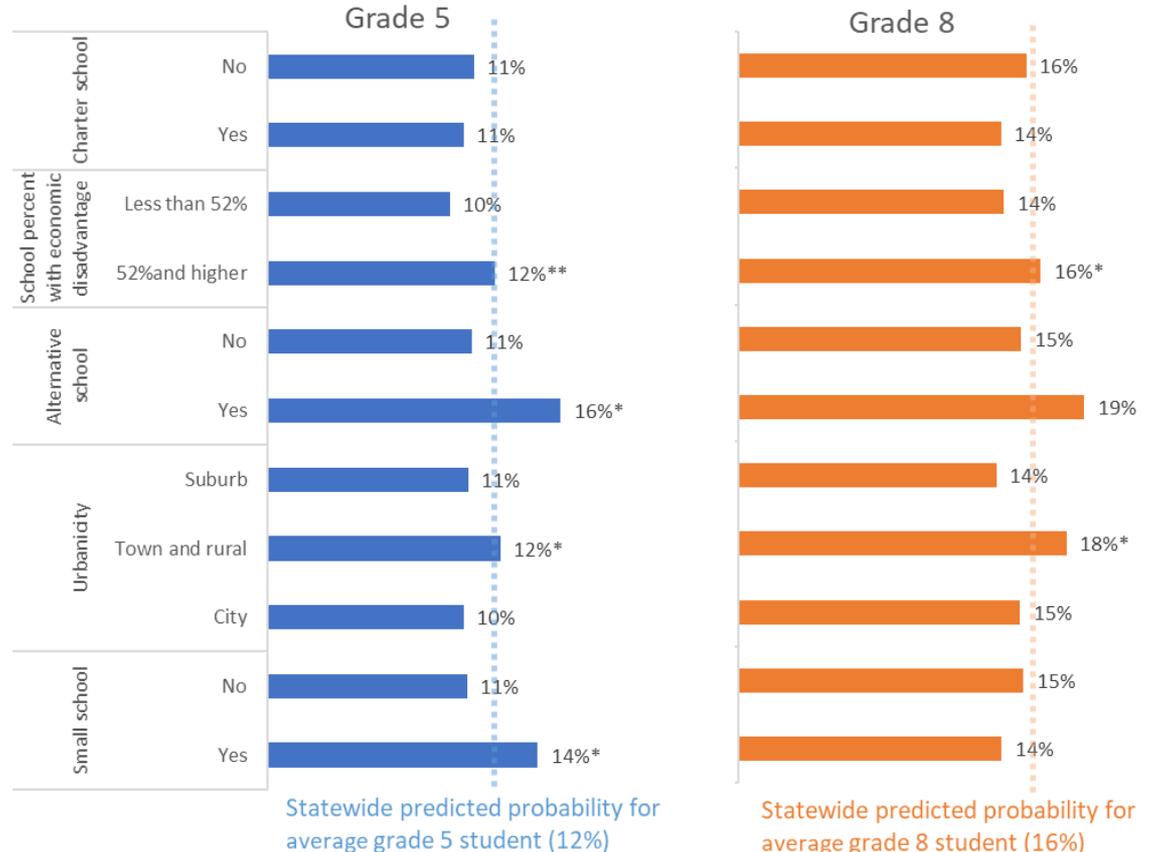
# The Pre-Pandemic Chronic Absence Rate for Mobile Students Increased Significantly Under the Alternative Definition

*Chronic Absence by Grade Level by Mobility, 2018-19*



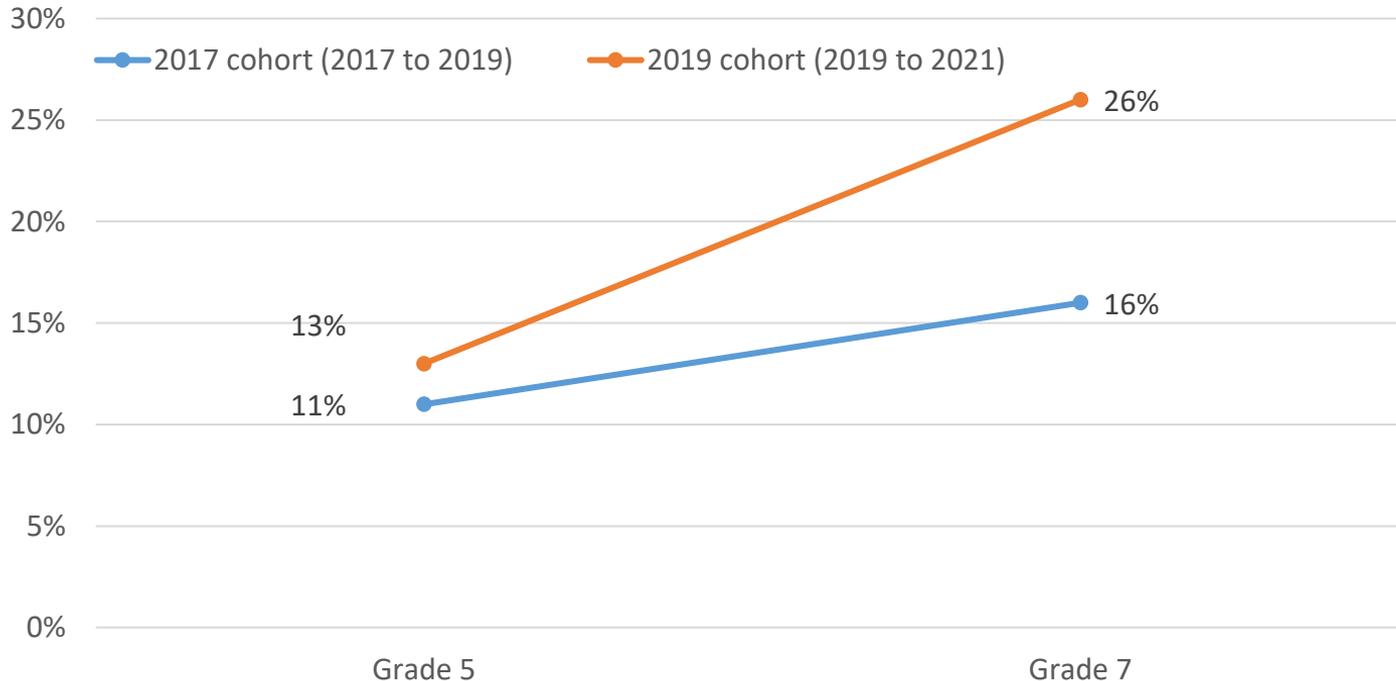
# Before the Pandemic Students Enrolled in Rural and in High Poverty Schools Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

## *Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019*



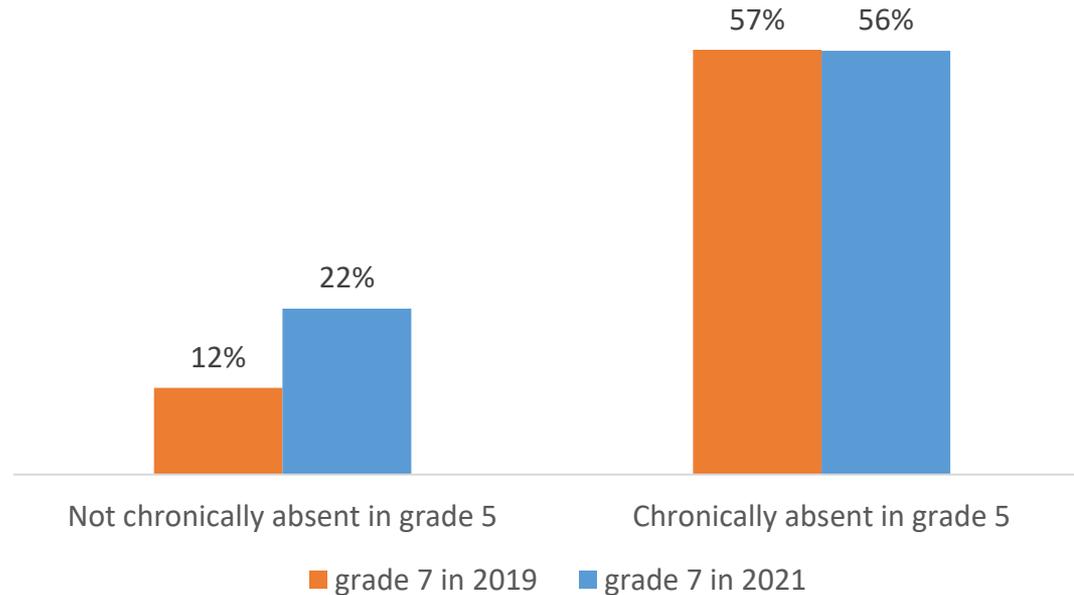
# Chronic Absence Rates Increased by 5 Percentage Points for the Grade 5 Cohort From 2017 to 2019 but Doubled Over the Same Grades From 2019 to 2021

*Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 5 and Grade 7, from 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2021*



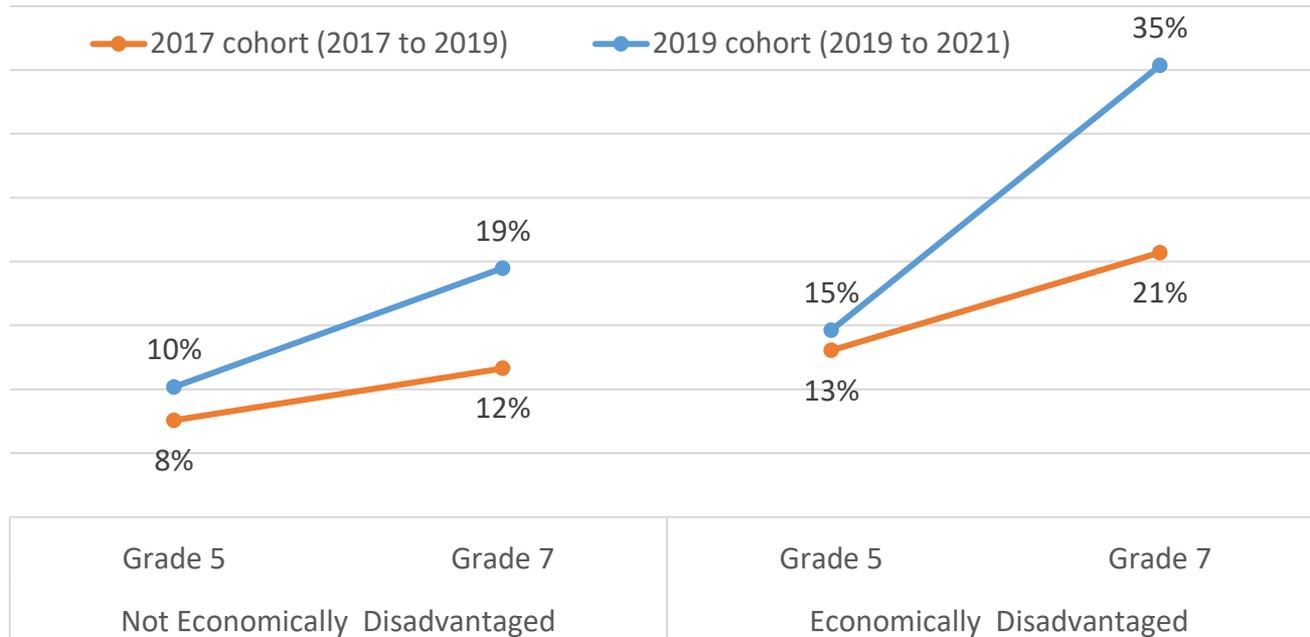
# Chronic Absence in Grade 5 Was Highly Predictive of Chronic Absence in Grade 7 Both Pre-Pandemic and During the Pandemic

*Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Chronic Absence Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts*



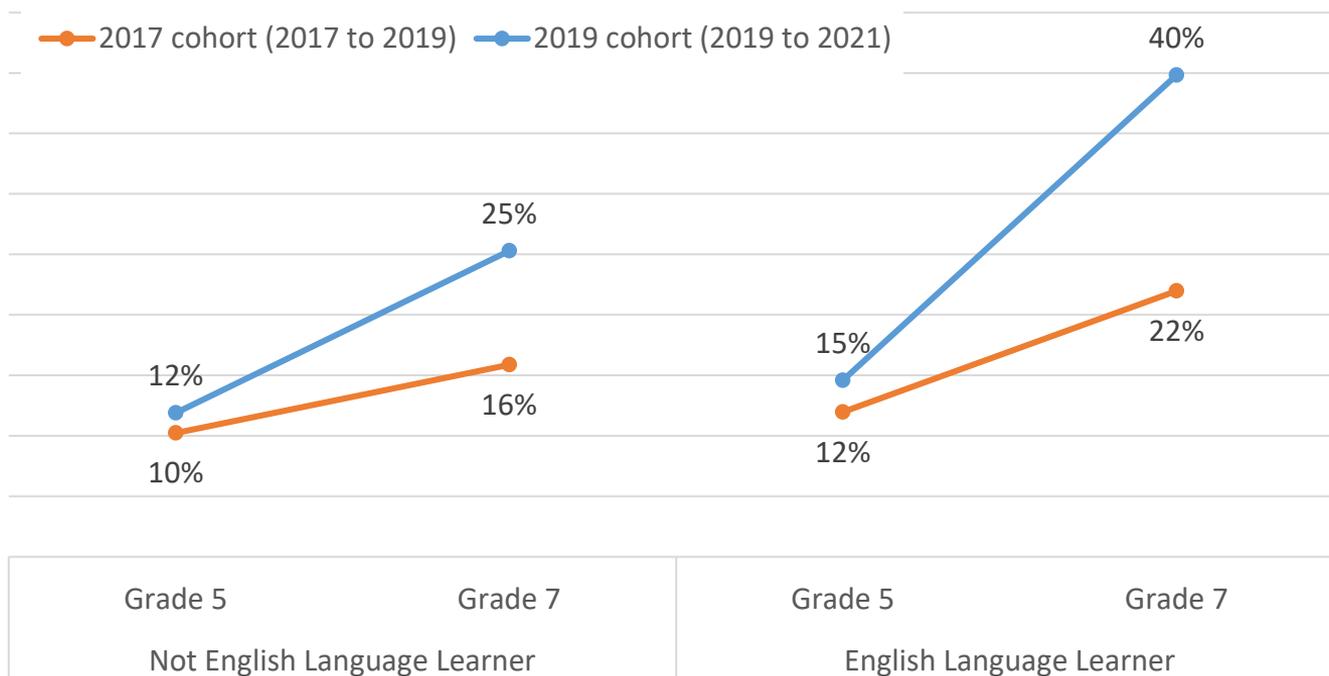
# The Difference in Chronic Absence Rates Between Students Classified As Economically Disadvantaged and Other Students Increased During the Pandemic

*Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Economic Disadvantage Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts*



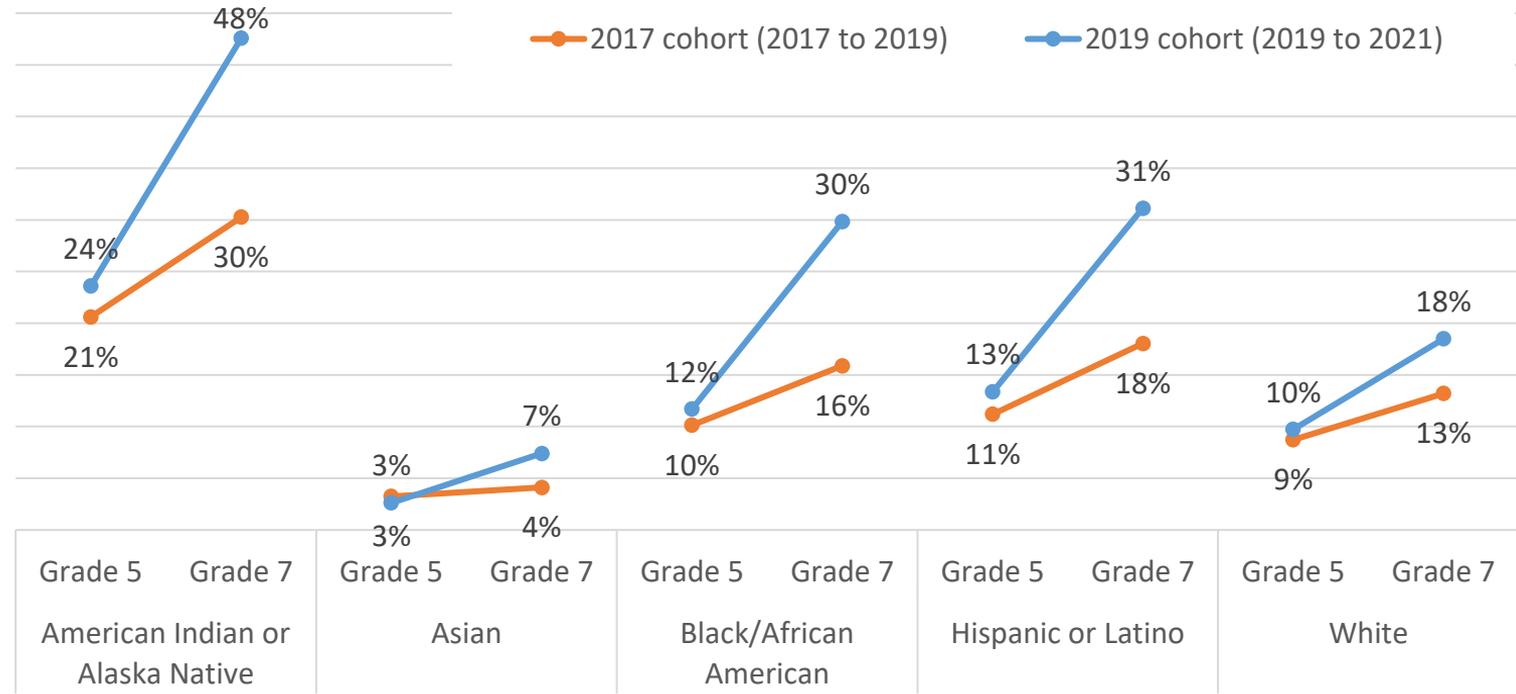
# The Difference in Chronic Absence Rates Between English Language Learner Students and Other Students Increased During the Pandemic

*Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by English Language Learner Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts*



# The Rates of Chronic Absence for American Indian or Alaska Native Students Nearly Reached 50 Percent in Grade 7 in 2021

*Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Race/Ethnicity Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts*



# Implications

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- The current definition does not accurately reflect chronic absenteeism among students who change schools. With increased student mobility during the pandemic, the current definition of a chronically absent student may need to be revisited for purposes in addition to school accountability.
- The pandemic exacerbated chronic absence for some groups, including economically disadvantaged students, English learners, American Indian students, Black students, and Hispanic/Latino students. ADE might consider providing supports to help LEAs target attendance and engagement support to the groups who have been most impacted.

# Possible Next Steps

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- Revisit how chronic absence is defined to help LEAs identify and support mobile students who are at risk of becoming chronically absent.
- Support LEAs in identifying evidence-based interventions to address chronic absence, especially for student groups who have experienced steep increases in chronic absence. Study which ones are working well for which student groups.
- Examine how the pandemic affected chronic absence and dropout rates in high school.