

Community Schools Impact on Student Outcomes: Evidence From California

FACT SHEET

What are community schools?

Community schools are an [evidence-based strategy](#) that unites schools, families, and community partners to improve student outcomes. California's community schools are organized around four core pillars: integrated student supports (such as health services, meals, academic supports); expanded learning opportunities, including after- and summer-school activities; collaborative leadership within the school and across partners; and family engagement. [State guidance](#) also highlights the importance of instructional strategies, school climate, and shared decision-making practices in California community schools.

What is the California Community Schools Partnership Program?

Since 2021, California has invested \$4.1 billion in the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP), establishing the nation's largest state-level community schools initiative. Serving nearly 2,500 high-need schools, the CCSPP addresses issues such as chronic absence and persistent achievement gaps by combining supports for family engagement, regular student attendance, and well-being with investments focused on learning recovery and acceleration.

The CCSPP implementation grants provide detailed frameworks and structured support at the state and regional levels while allowing for local adaptation—a balance that is critical to the community schools approach. Beyond adding services to schools, the program transforms the relationship between the community and the school.

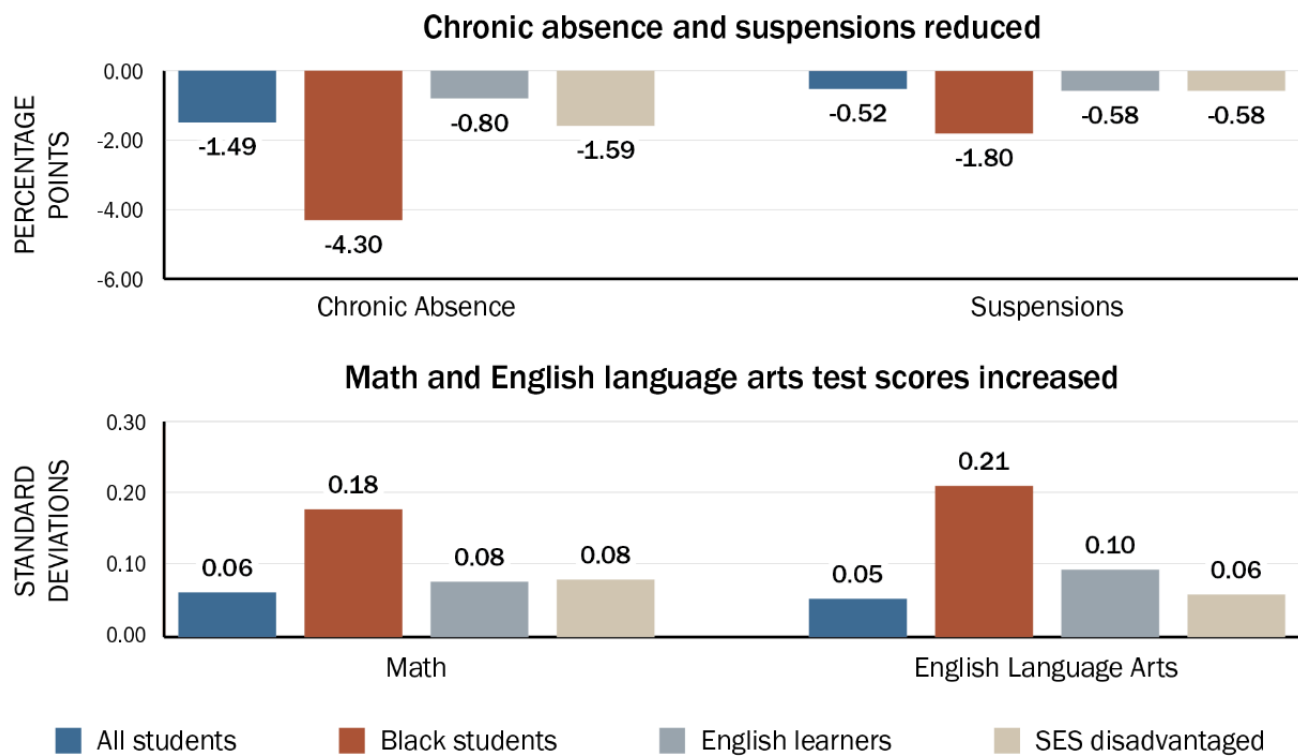
What impact is the CCSPP having on student outcomes?

CCSPP grants were distributed to schools across various grade levels, regions, and community types, and with high rates (over 90%) of students from low-income families, English learners, and/or students in foster care. Using the latest 2023–24 data, LPI examined changes in student outcomes for new and expanding community schools funded by CCSPP in 2022 compared to similar matched comparison schools. Even during their first full year of implementation, results show consistently positive effects on student outcomes across multiple areas.

- **Improved Test Scores.** Schools newly implementing and expanding community school approaches showed notable learning gains—equal to about 43 extra days of learning in math and 36 in English language arts (ELA).
- **Reduced Chronic Absence.** On average, CCSPP schools reduced chronic absence rates by about 30% more than similar schools. Attendance improvements were most noticeable in elementary schools and in small schools, suggesting that these schools are successfully implementing attendance-focused strategies.
- **Reduced Suspension Rates.** On average, CCSPP schools reduced suspensions by 15%, with the largest decreases for Black students and in secondary schools—the students and schools where suspension rates were previously highest. The suspension rates of English learners and students from low-income backgrounds were also significantly reduced in CCSPP schools.

- Largest Gains Among Historically Underserved Students.** While all student groups benefited from community school investments, gains were greatest for Black students, followed by English learners and students from low-income backgrounds. For Black students, the impact equaled about 130 extra days of math learning and 151 in ELA, along with much larger drops in absences and suspensions. English learners gained about 58 extra days in math and 72 in ELA, while socioeconomically disadvantaged students gained about 58 days in math and 43 in ELA. These results show community schools may be especially effective at closing opportunity gaps.
- Greatest Test Score Gains for CCSPP Schools With Biggest Chronic Absence Drops.** CCSPP schools saw greater learning gains as they increased regular student attendance when compared to non-CCSPP schools that had similar attendance improvements. This finding suggests that whole child strategies that center engagement of students, families, and community enhance the benefits of improved attendance beyond simply adding more class time.

Estimated Effects of CCSPP Across Outcomes, by Student Group



Notes: CCSPP = California Community Schools Partnership Program. SES = socioeconomic status. Chronic absence is calculated as the percentage of students who miss 10% or more of the school year. Suspensions are the percentage of students with at least one suspension. Math and ELA California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) scale scores standardized by grade subject and year.

Learn more

Access the *Community Schools Impact on Student Outcomes: Evidence From California* [brief](#) or [report](#) for more information.

This research was supported by the Stuart Foundation.