Students Enrolled in Flexible, Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools Thrived During the Pandemic

The results from the 2021-2022 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment, which is California's standardized test, confirmed widespread concerns that students across the state experienced significant learning losses during the pandemic.
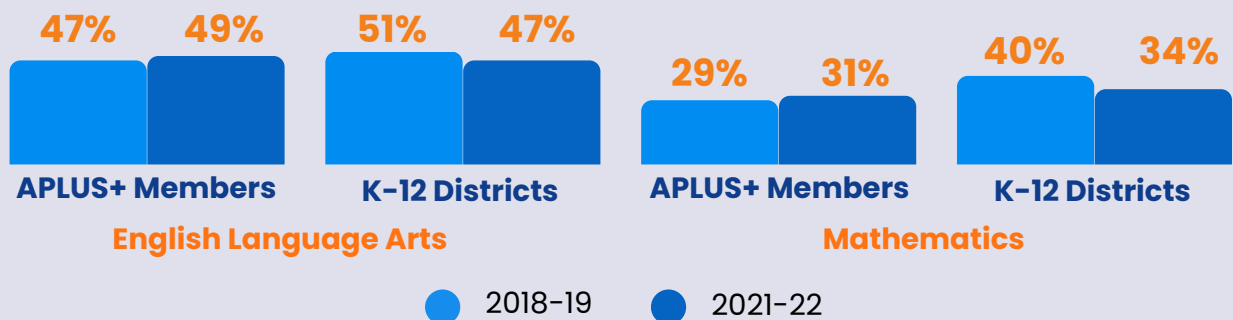
There is however a bright spot to highlight in public education. The latest state test results show that students enrolled in APLUS+ Personalized Learning public charter schools did not experience learning loss during the pandemic school years. While an unprecedented number of students across the state need academic recovery, Personalized Learning students made huge gains in meeting grade-level proficiency. APLUS+ member schools are effectively closing the achievement gap for tens of thousands of students across the state.

Personalized Learning Public Charter School Student Scores Increased from 2018-19 to 2021-22 on Statewide Test as District Student Scores Decreased

- The percentage of students enrolled in APLUS+ member schools meeting or exceeding the English Language Arts (ELA) standard increased from 47% to 49% (2 percentage points) and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the math standard increased from 29% to 31% (2 percentage points).

- The percentage of students at K-12 district schools meeting or exceeding the ELA standard decreased from 51% to 47% (4 percentage points) and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the math standard dropped from 40% to 34% (6 percentage points).

Percent of Students Who Met or Exceeded Grade Level Standard on State Test

	English Language Arts				Mathematics		
	APLUS+ Members		K-12 Districts		APLUS+ Members		K-12 Districts
2018-19	47%		51%		29%		40%
2021-22	49%		47%		31%		34%

● 2018-19 ● 2021-22

APLUS+ Member Schools are Closing the Achievement Gap by Accelerating Student Progress in Meeting State Standards

When looking at California's Academic Indicator, which shows Average Distance from Standard (DFS), Personalized Learning students made significant gains in both ELA and math on the 2021-22 state test compared to 2018-19. The statistics below use a percentage change formula to calculate students' gains or losses in DFS. *[For example, a student who moved from +5 DFS to +10 DFS represents a 100% increase.]*

On the ELA state test, APLUS+ member schools' results are as follows:

- All students in grades 3-8 and 11 increased by 61%
- Socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) students increased by 8%
- Students with disabilities (SWD) increased by 15%
- Hispanic/Latino (HIS) students increased by 22%
- Black/African American (AA) students increased by 7%

On the math state test, APLUS+ member schools' results are as follows:

- All students in grades 3-8 and 11 increased by 15%
- Socio-economically disadvantaged students increased by 6%
- Students with disabilities increased by 10%
- Hispanic/Latino students increased by 6%
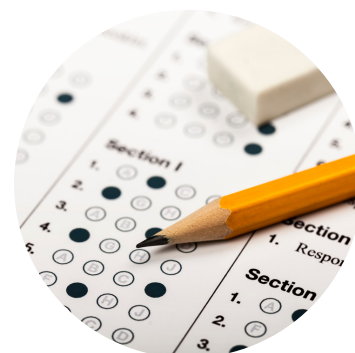- Black/African American students increased by 8%

By contrast, 2021-22 student scores at K-12 districts were all lower than pre-pandemic results.

On the ELA state test, K-12 district results are as follows:

- All students in grades 3-8 and 11 decreased by -390%
- Economically disadvantaged (ECD) students decreased by -35%
- Students with disabilities decreased by -7%
- Hispanic/Latino students decreased by -43%
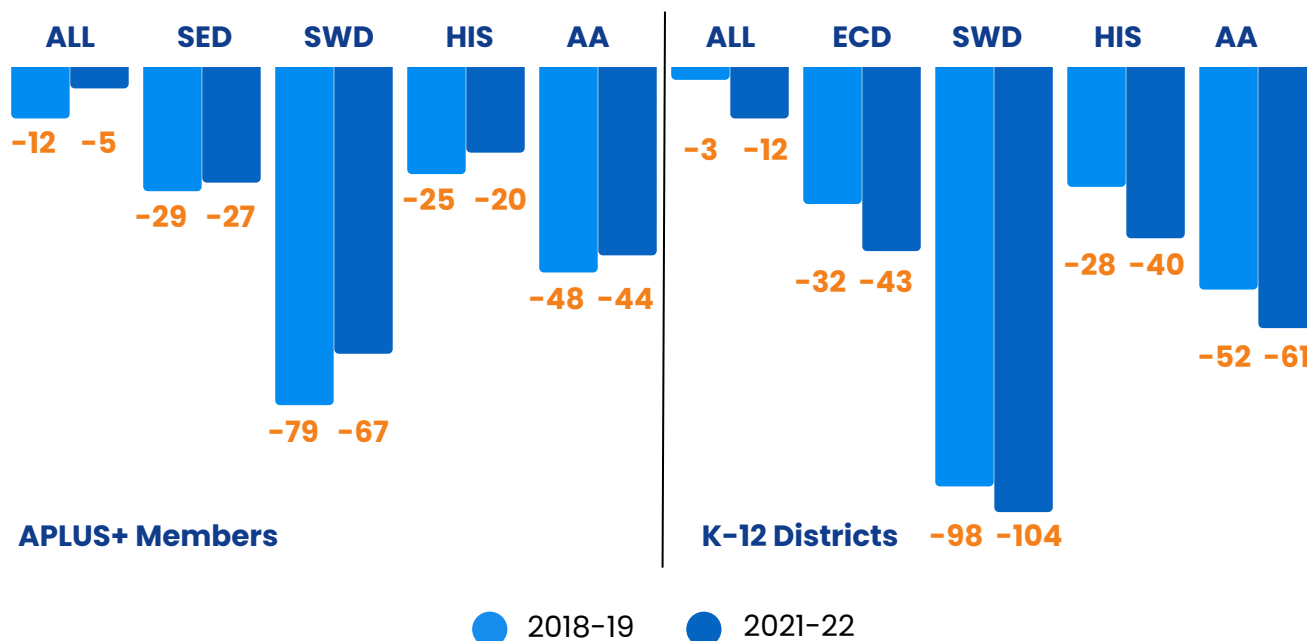- Black/African American students decreased by -19%

On the math state test, K-12 district results are as follows:

- All students in grades 3-8 and 11 decreased by -57%
- Economically disadvantaged students decreased by -32%
- Students with disabilities decreased by -8%
- Hispanic/Latino students decreased by -34%
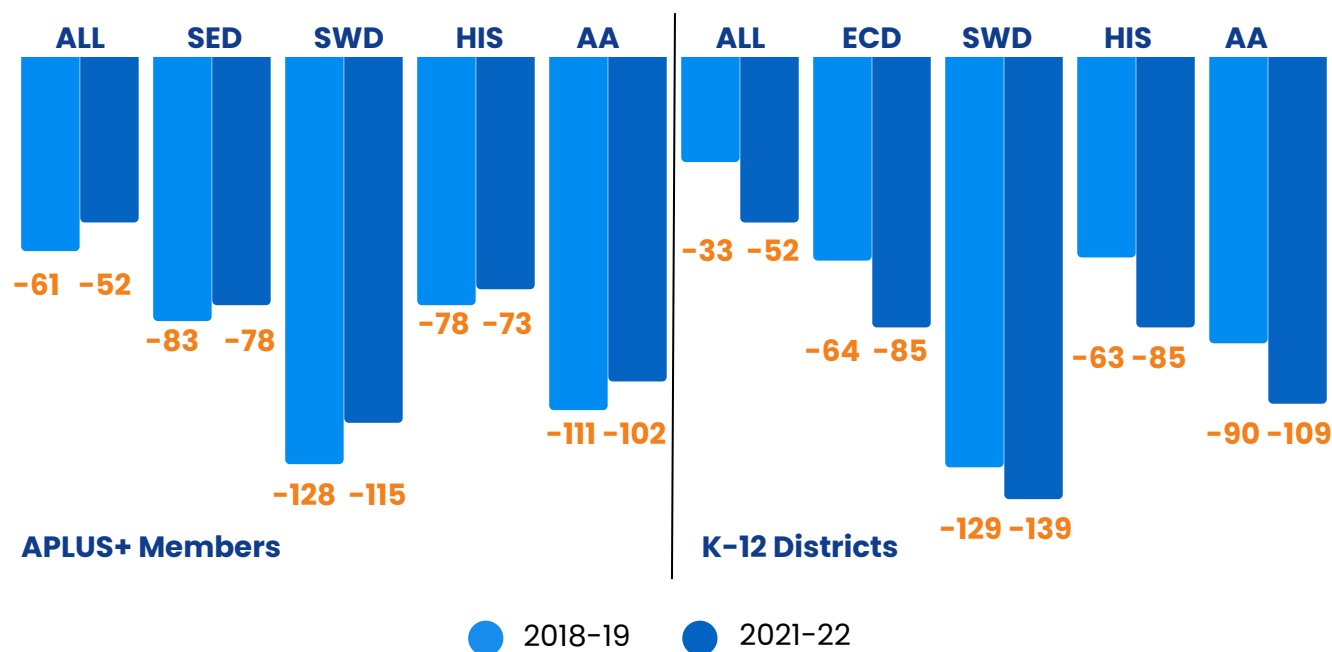- Black/African American students decreased by -21%

Data Source(s): CALPADS Snapshot 1.2 and 1.18 and CERS data files were used for APLUS+ DFS calculations. CAASPP Research data files were used to calculate DFS values for K-12 unified districts. CAASPP Research data files do not include results for socio-economically disadvantaged students. However, results for economically disadvantaged students are included.

English Language Arts - Average Distance from Standard

APLUS+ Members

ALL	SED	SWD	HIS	AA
−12 −5	−29 −27	−79 −67	−25 −20	−48 −44

K-12 Districts

ALL	ECD	SWD	HIS	AA
−3 −12	−32 −43	−98 −104	−28 −40	−52 −61

● 2018–19   ● 2021–22

Math - Average Distance from Standard

APLUS+ Members

ALL	SED	SWD	HIS	AA
−61 −52	−83 −78	−128 −115	−78 −73	−111 −102

K-12 Districts

ALL	ECD	SWD	HIS	AA
−33 −52	−64 −85	−129 −139	−63 −85	−90 −109

● 2018–19   ● 2021–22

The pandemic reinforced the tremendous value and benefits of flexible, personalized learning models, enabling these schools to adapt more readily to pandemic-related school site closures and immediately offer rigorous education in alternative settings. These public charter schools, which provide an alternative to a one-size-fits-all education, benefit many students throughout the state who are not well served by a traditional, classroom-only model.

APLUS+ Network Data Research Details

Student Participation in 2021-22 Statewide Test:

- ELA test scores for APLUS+ member schools include 25,251 students
- ELA test scores for K-12 districts include 1,857,782 students
- Math test scores for APLUS+ member schools include 25,246 students
- Math test scores for K-12 districts include 1,860,728 students

APLUS+ Data Research Methodology and Parameters When Using CAASPP Research Files:

- Student group = all students in grades 3-8 and 11
- Excluded Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) schools
- Limited to APLUS+ member K-12 local educational agencies (LEAs) and K-12 unified school districts with a student participation rate greater than 70%
- Matched cohort analysis for 2018-19 and 2021-22 scores
- Grade-level mean scale scores are used to calculate the average distance from standard (DFS)
  - Minimum scale score threshold for standard met
  - Weighted average based on valid scores
  - Valid scores greater than 150 for DFS
  - Addresses data privacy suppression rule; valid scores greater than 10 for met or exceeded

About the Association of Personalized Learning Schools & Services (APLUS+)

APLUS+ was founded in 2002 and currently represents 93 Personalized Learning public charter schools collectively serving more than 90,000 K-12 students who reside in 56 counties throughout California. APLUS+ member schools employ more than 2,500 credentialed teachers who provide student-centered education delivered through multiple learning settings.

For more information, please visit theaplus.org or contact Jeff Rice, founder/director of APLUS+ at jeff@theaplus.org