



# Still Missing Too Much School

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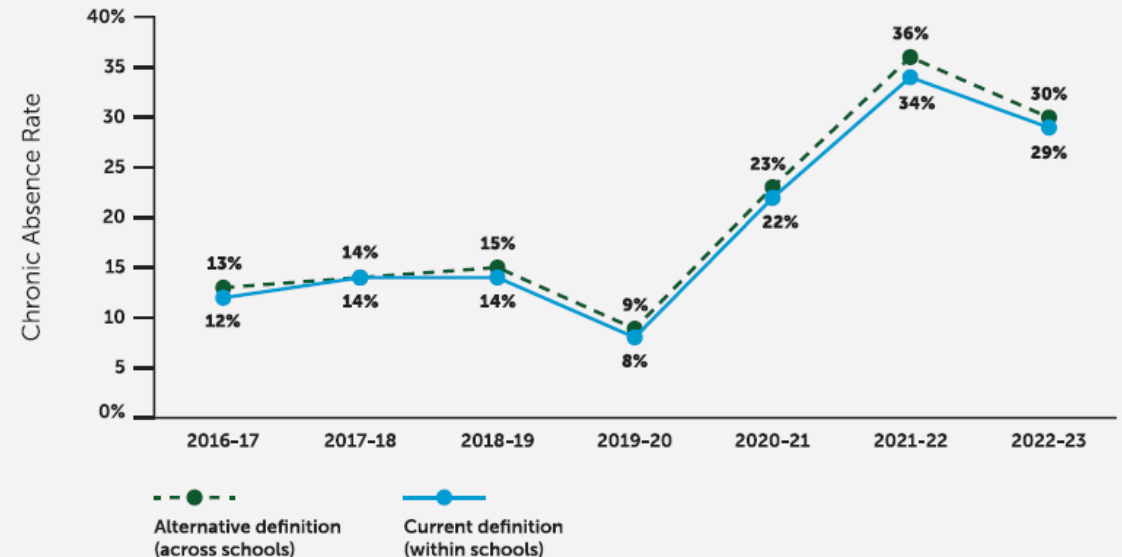
# Arizona Numbers Remain High

Nearly 1 of 3 Arizona students (29%) in grades 1-8 were chronically absent in the 2022-23 school year.

While this represents a slight decline from the peak of 34% during 2021-22, it remains **more than double pre-pandemic rates**.

Arizona slightly undercounts chronic absenteeism by defining it as missing 10% of the school year at a single school, not total days missed across schools attended.

**2022–23 Chronic Absence Rates Declined But Still 2X Higher than Pre-pandemic**



**Source:** Authors' analysis based on Arizona Department of Education data

**Note:** Statewide Annual Rates of Chronic Absence, SY2016–17 to SY2022–23. Excluding students in kindergarten, the analysis population included 693,749 students in 2016–17, 682,924 in 2017–18, 692,796 in 2018–19, 693,947 in 2019–20, 669,149 in 2020–21, 672,888 in 2021–22, and 667,435 in 2022–23.

# Related Arizona Task Force Recommendation

## Arizona Chronic Absence Task Force Recommendation:

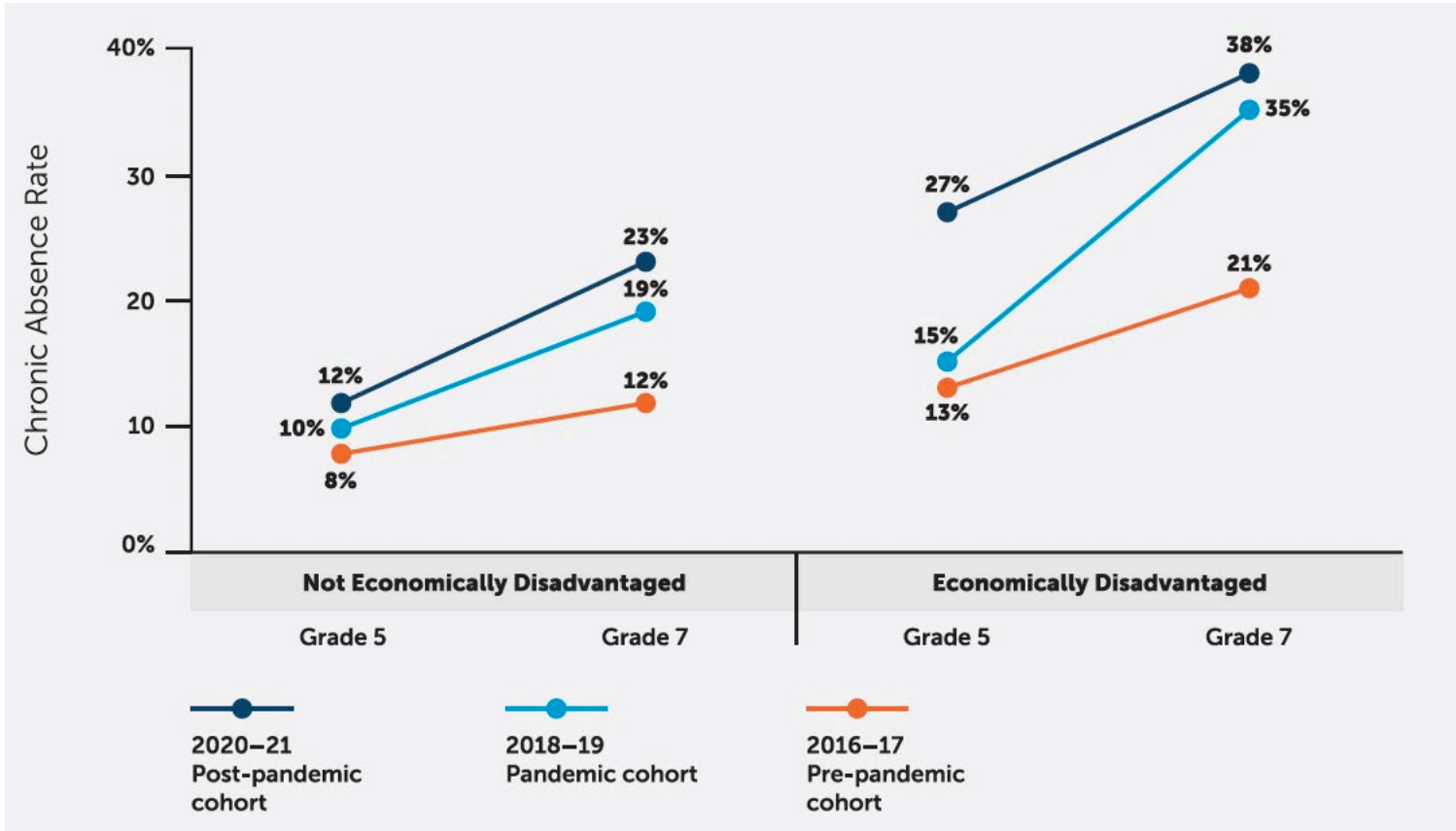
**Collect actionable data to identify challenges and drive solutions.**

**Revisit chronic absence definition.** Arizona's definition of chronic absence should account for student mobility. This will make it possible for schools to better identify and support at-risk students.

*Arizona slightly undercounts chronic absenteeism by defining it as missing 10% of the school year at a single school, not total days missed across schools attended.*

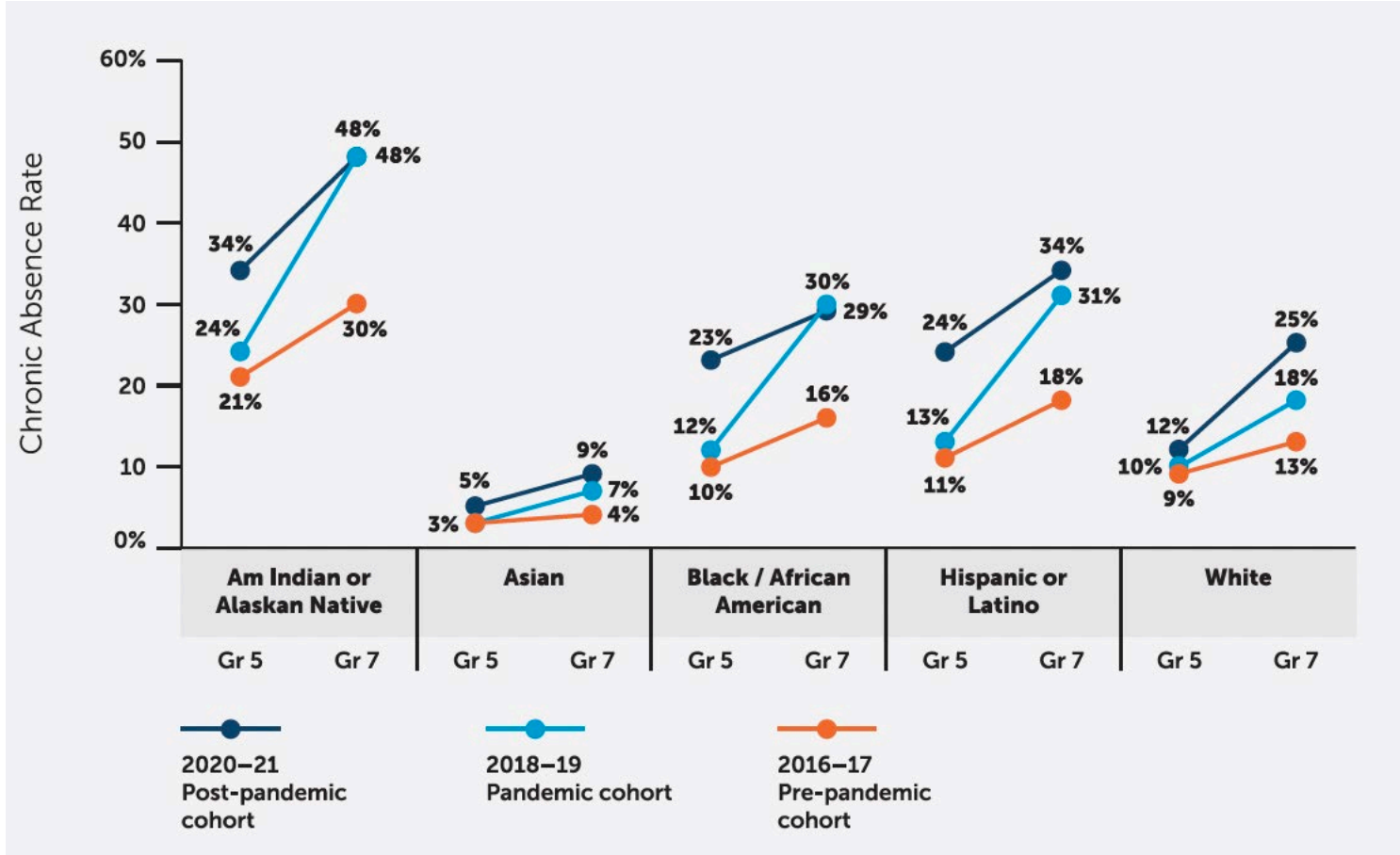
*The gaps in chronic absence rates between vulnerable student populations and other students that increased during the pandemic have not continued to widen.*

# Rates Remain Elevated for Economically Disadvantaged Students



Chronic absence rates for economically disadvantaged students continue to be significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels.

# Gaps Between Different Racial/Ethnic Groups Remain Significant



Among groups that experienced the largest increases in chronic absence during the pandemic, the gaps in chronic absence for their peers have stopped increasing post-pandemic—even if rates for all racial/ethnic groups remained above pre-pandemic levels.

# Related Arizona Task Force Recommendation

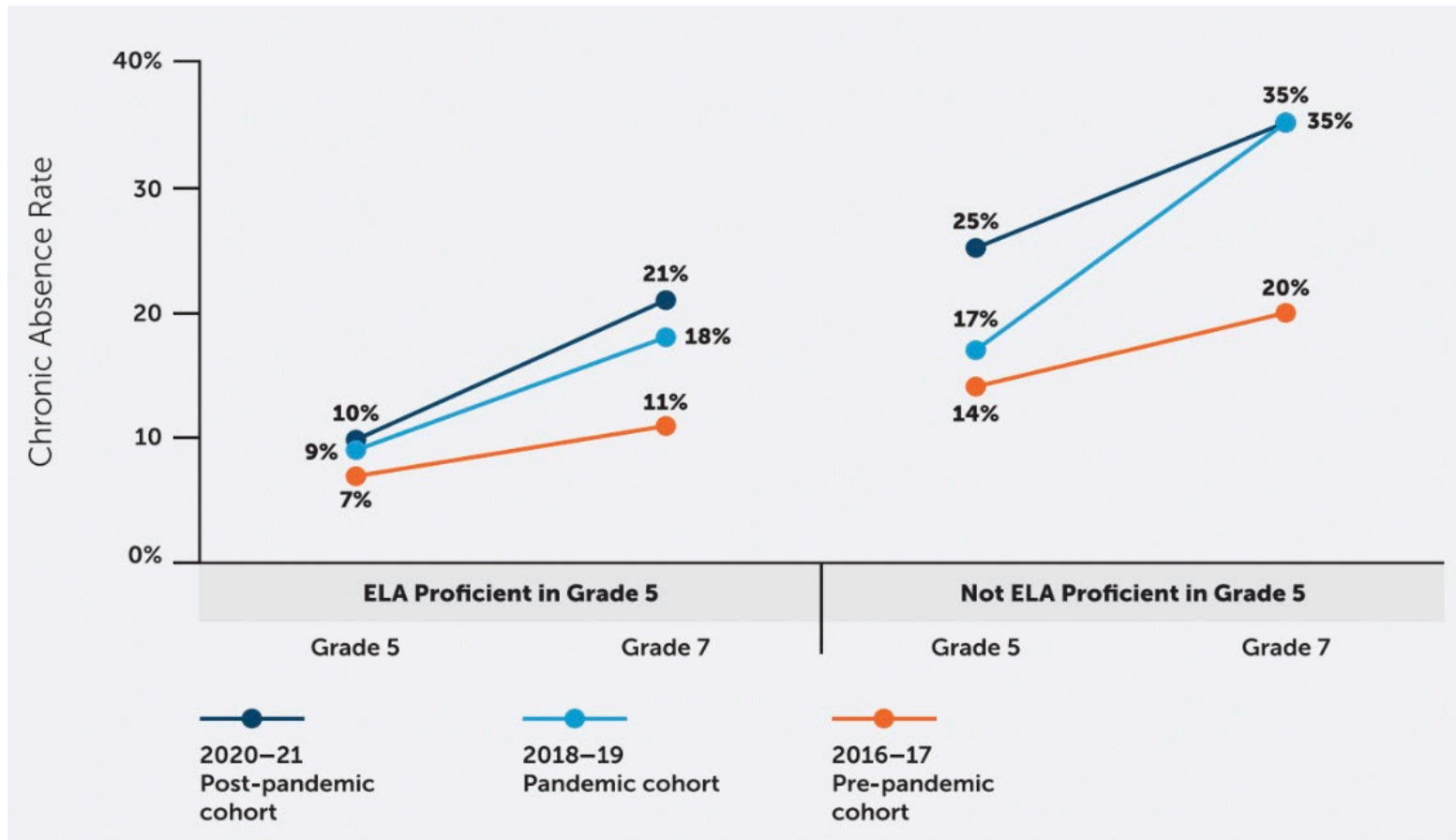
## Arizona Chronic Absence Task Force Recommendation:

**Collect actionable data to identify challenges and drive solutions.**

**Prioritize data collection.** Expand attendance data tracking by grade and subgroup, ensuring all schools and districts have access to comprehensive and actionable data via tools like MapLIT.

*The gaps in chronic absence rates between vulnerable student populations and other students that increased during the pandemic have not continued to widen.*

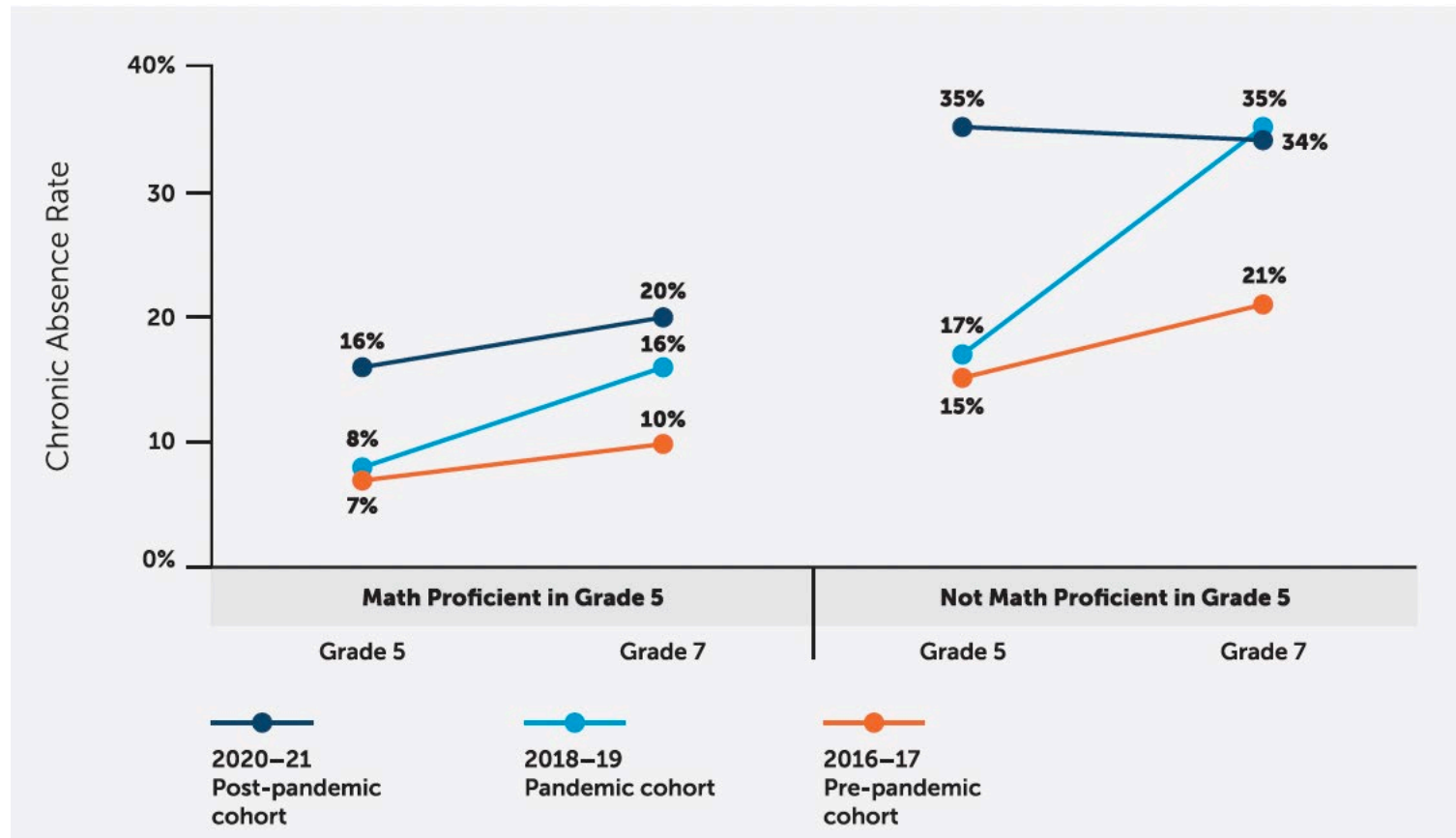
# ELA Proficient Students Less Likely to be Chronically Absent in Grade 7



This lower likelihood of chronic absence for ELA- proficient students was true for all three cohorts.



# Math Proficient Students Less Likely to Be Chronically Absent



As with ELA, this lower likelihood of Grade 7 chronic absence for Math-proficient students was true for all three cohorts.

# Murphy Elementary School District Key Actions

- Parent Communication and Support:** Principals hosted coffee sessions with parents to emphasize the importance of consistent attendance and even provided transportation for students when needed.
- Provision of School Uniforms:** The district provided school uniforms to prevent students from staying home due to lack of appropriate clothing.
- Celebration of Attendance Milestones:** Rewards such as pizza, ice cream, and nachos were given to students for achieving attendance milestones.
- Use of Technology:** A digital communication tool was used to connect school communities through photos, videos, and messages.
- Holistic Support:** The district offered mental health support, tutoring, mentorship programs, and after-school enrichment to address students' needs comprehensively.

# Alhambra Elementary School District Key Actions

- **Attendance Improvement Teams:** Established teams at each school to prioritize a culture of support and individualized attention for students.
- **Basic Needs Support:** Provided food boxes, hygiene kits, clothes, and free weekly medical services through the Family Resource Center and Wesley Community & Health Centers.
- **Parental Engagement:** Initiated empathetic, non-punitive conversations with families to uncover and address attendance barriers.
- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborated with organizations like Valley of the Sun United Way and the National Coalition for Improvement in Education for additional support and resources.

# Implications and Next Steps

- Build Awareness:
  - Consider how you can join the statewide call to action to address chronic absence and promote regular school attendance.
- Engage in Data-Driven Decision Making:
  - Ensure schools have actionable data to identify patterns and examine root causes of attendance issues in local communities.
  - Update the definition and accountability metrics of chronic absence to better identify students who move schools during the year
- Support the Use of Evidence-Based Strategies:
  - Prevention and intervention strategies to address chronic absence should be evidence-based, fit the local context and needs, and be examined locally for their effectiveness.
  - Review and share the Arizona Chronic Absence Resource Guide which provides a framework of evidence-based strategies: <https://lithubaz.org/chronic-absence/>

*Questions?*

*Discussion*

*Thank you*