

Racial Equity Effects of Restricting In-Person Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

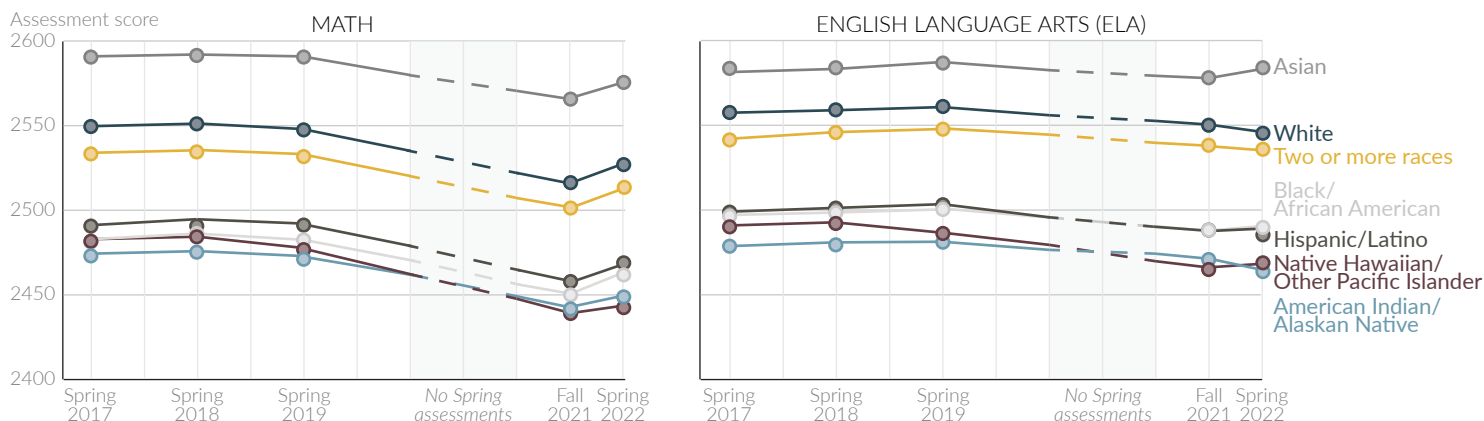
2023 JLARC STUDY

In June 2021, JLARC staff were directed to analyze how pandemic-related restrictions to in-person instruction affected educational opportunities and academic outcomes for students of different races and ethnicities.

 [VIEW INTERACTIVE DATA](#)

Racial disparities in student assessment scores increased, especially in higher poverty schools

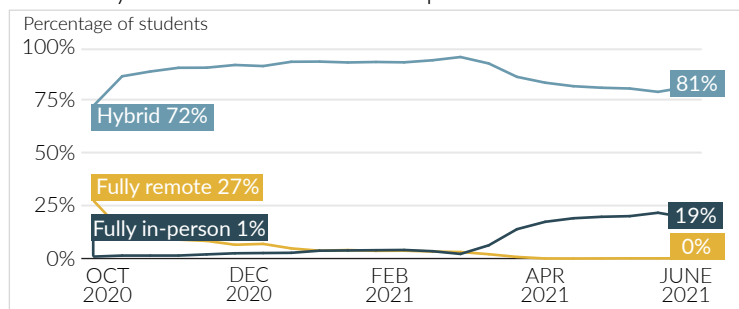
Assessment scores declined for students of all races and ethnicities, and disparities in scores widened.



JLARC staff identified school and student characteristics associated with assessment scores. School poverty level had the largest association with assessment scores' declines.

Districts offered hybrid instruction to most students during the 2020-21 school year

However, larger assessment score declines were not necessarily associated with less in-person instruction.



OSPI does not yet have a process to monitor the effectiveness of federally funded interventions to promote learning recovery

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) received **\$2.9 billion** in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Most of the funds are passed on to school districts.

Districts developed plans to address the effects of the pandemic. The plans include specific interventions to help students academically. OSPI has not yet provided a process for districts to report their progress implementing the plans.

Without monitoring districts' progress or measuring spending outcomes, there is limited information available about whether districts are achieving their goals and if they are addressing racial disparities in education.

Detailed race and ethnicity data not yet fully collected

State law directs OSPI to collect more detailed student race and ethnicity data. OSPI has not completed data collection.

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS

OSPI should finish collecting more detailed race and ethnicity data for all students, in accordance with 2016 state legislation.

OSPI should establish a process to monitor school districts' implementation of their Academic and Student Well-being Recovery Plans, in accordance with 2021 state legislation.

The complete report is on the JLARC web site: www.leg.wa.gov/jlarc

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January 2023