PRELIMINARY REPORT

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

Legislative Auditor’s Conclusion:
Racial disparities in student assessment scores increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in higher poverty schools. OSPI does not yet have a process to monitor the effectiveness of federally funded interventions to promote learning recovery.

Aaron Cavin | Joshua Karas | Stephanie Seto

January 2023
Restrictions to in-person education

- **March 2020** – no in-person education

- **2020-21 school year** – in-person allowed in accordance with public health rules

- **April 2021** – some in-person required
JLARC staff to evaluate how COVID-19 restrictions affected racial equity in education

(Committee sponsored, 2021)

Analyzed available racial equity indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available data</th>
<th>Unavailable or not comparable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment scores</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to experienced teachers</td>
<td>Course passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student substance use</td>
<td>Student discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student mental health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff not directed to evaluate decisions about limiting in-person school activities
Presentation Overview

Student Race and Ethnicity Data
Mode of Instruction and Enrollment
Changes in Assessment Scores
Changes in Other Equity Indicators
OSPI Recovery Monitoring
Presentation Overview

Student Race and Ethnicity Data

Mode of Instruction and Enrollment

Changes in Assessment Scores

Changes in Other Equity Indicators

OSPI Recovery Monitoring
Analysis based on federal race and ethnicity categories

Race and ethnicity categories:
American Indian/Alaska Native
Asian
Black/African American
Hispanic/Latino
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
White
Two or More Races

2016 Legislation
RCW 28A.300.042 requires OSPI to collect more detailed race and ethnicity data
Legislative Auditor’s Recommendation

1

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

Student Race and Ethnicity Data

Mode of Instruction and Enrollment

Changes in Assessment Scores

Changes in Other Equity Indicators

OSPI Recovery Monitoring
Instructional modes in 2020-21

OSPI collected data from school districts about types of instruction offered during the 2020-21 school year.

**Remote**
Schools offered all instruction outside school facilities

**In-Person**
Schools offered all instruction in person, in a classroom or another school facility

**Hybrid**
Schools offered a combination of remote and in-person instruction
Most students were offered hybrid instruction during the 2020-21 school year.
Students of different races and ethnicities returned to in-person instruction at different rates.

- **White**: 24% of White students
- **American Indian/Alaskan Native**: 5%
- **Hispanic/Latino**: 20%
- **Two or more races**: 15%
- **Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**: 10%
- **Black/African American**: 5%
- **Asian**: 3% of Asian students

Overall, students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds returned to in-person instruction at varying rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Public school enrollment declined, especially for White students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student race and ethnicity</th>
<th>Enrollment change, 2019-20 to 2020-21</th>
<th>Percent change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Native American</td>
<td>-106</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-729</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>-341</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>-2,068</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>-2,296</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-37,224</td>
<td>-5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presentation Overview

Student Race and Ethnicity Data
Mode of Instruction and Enrollment
Changes in Assessment Scores
Changes in Other Equity Indicators
OSPI Recovery Monitoring
Staff analyzed annual standardized assessments

- Smarter Balanced Assessment evaluates math and English language arts (ELA) skills for students in 3rd through 8th and 10th grade.
- Spring 2020 assessment was canceled.
- Spring 2021 assessment was postponed until Fall 2021.
Average math and ELA scores declined from Spring 2019 to Spring 2022.
Scores declined for students of all races and ethnicities.

From Spring 2019 to Fall 2021
- **5.8% decrease**
- **11.5% decrease**

None have recovered to pre-pandemic scores.
Scores declined for students of all races and ethnicities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Score Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.1% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5.1% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Spring 2019 to Fall 2021

None have recovered to pre-pandemic scores
Assessment scores varied by other school and student characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th>Fall 2021</th>
<th>Spring 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School poverty level</td>
<td>-13% to -15%</td>
<td>-17% to -22%</td>
<td>-17% to -22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free and reduced-price lunch eligibility</td>
<td>-10% to -12%</td>
<td>-10% to -12%</td>
<td>-10% to -12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td>3% (math only)</td>
<td>3% (math only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presentation Overview

Student Race and Ethnicity Data
Mode of Instruction and Enrollment
Changes in Assessment Scores
Changes in Other Equity Indicators
OSPI Recovery Monitoring
Student substance use declined from 2018 to 2021 according to Healthy Youth Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette use</td>
<td>58% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use</td>
<td>45% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana use</td>
<td>47% ↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Largest substance use declines:

- Cigarette use among Black/African American students decreased by 74%.
- Alcohol use among Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students decreased by 62%.
- Marijuana use among Hispanic/Latino students decreased by 63%. 
Reported mental health problems increased for all students

Students of all racial and ethnic groups reported increases in anxiety

- Students who reported feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge in the last two weeks
  - 2018: 63.8%
  - 2021: 68.1%
Access to experienced teachers increased from 2019 to 2021, reducing racial disparities

OSPI defines experienced teachers as teachers with five or more years of experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide: 75%</td>
<td>Statewide: 80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% of teachers for White students were experienced.</td>
<td>81% of teachers for White students were experienced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68% to 75% of teachers for students of color were experienced.</td>
<td>75% to 79% of teachers for students of color were experienced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers reported challenges during the 2020-21 school year

6,692 teachers from 1,475 schools in 228 school districts responded to JLARC staff survey

Teachers reported covering less of their normal curriculum

Most teachers described the following as serious problems:
- Students missing class
- Students not completing homework
- Class participation
- Student apathy

Teachers at schools with lower percentages of White students were more likely to report these problems as serious
Presentation Overview

Student Race and Ethnicity Data
Mode of Instruction and Enrollment
Changes in Assessment Scores
Changes in Other Equity Indicators

OSPI Recovery Monitoring
$2.9 billion
in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds

90% passed on to school districts

At least $334 million to address “learning loss”
Districts submitted Academic and Student Well-being Recovery Plans to OSPI

Interventions include:
- Social-emotional learning and mental health supports
- Summer school
- Additional instructional time
- High-quality tutoring
- And 18 others
OSPI has not yet established process to monitor plan implementation

Unclear if districts meeting learning recovery goals

Reporting required by 2021 Legislature (ESHB 1368)

Plan

Implementation

Performance measurement

Targeting remaining funds

$1.4 billion remaining (September 2022)

OSPI has not yet established process to monitor plan implementation

Unclear if districts meeting learning recovery goals

Plan

Implementation

Performance measurement

Targeting remaining funds

$1.4 billion remaining (September 2022)
There is insufficient detail at the state level to identify how much money is being spent on specific interventions.

Districts spent $1.2 billion (as of September 2022).

74% of learning recovery funds reported in “other” categories.
Legislative Auditor’s Recommendation

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.
Access to in-person instruction varied by race and ethnicity.

Assessment scores decreased for all racial and ethnic groups, with larger decreases for some groups.

OSPI and districts received $2.9 billion in federal funds to address pandemic effects.

OSPI has not yet established a process to monitor recovery plan implementation.
Next Steps

Proposed Final Report
May 2023

View the full report:
www.leg.wa.gov/jlarc

Video Summary
One Page Overview
Interactive Data
PDF Version