



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.

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

Available data

- Student enrollment
- Assessment scores
- Access to experienced teachers
- Student substance use
- Student mental health

Unavailable or not comparable

- Attendance
- Graduation
- Course passage
- Student discipline

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



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Analysis based on federal race and ethnicity categories

Race and ethnicity categories:

American Indian/Alaska Native

Asian → *Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and other identities*

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

A photograph of the Washington State Capitol building, featuring a large dome and classical architecture, set against a bright sky. The building is surrounded by green lawns and some trees in the foreground.

Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

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



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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

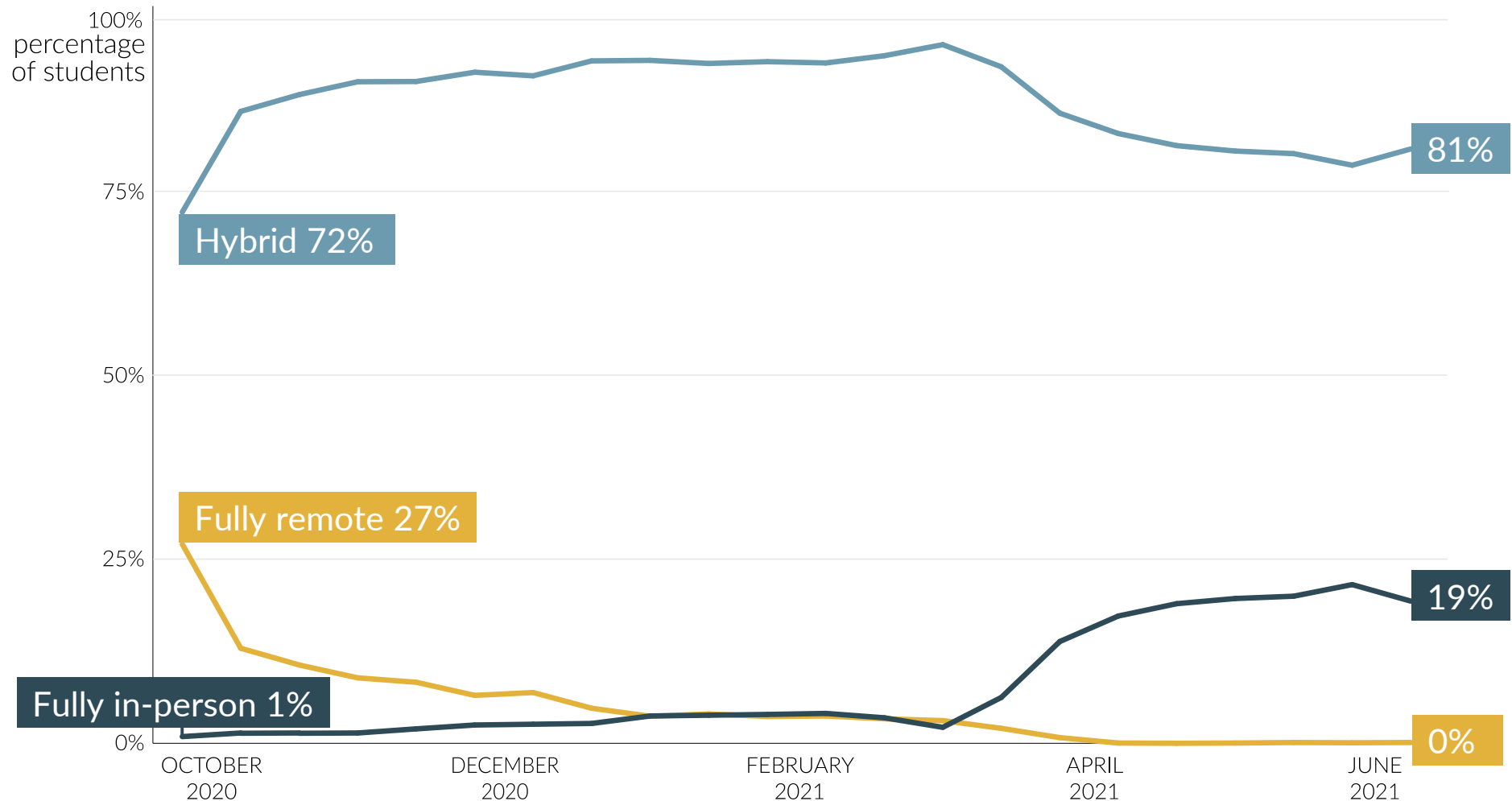
In-Person

Schools offered all instruction in person, in a classroom or another school facility

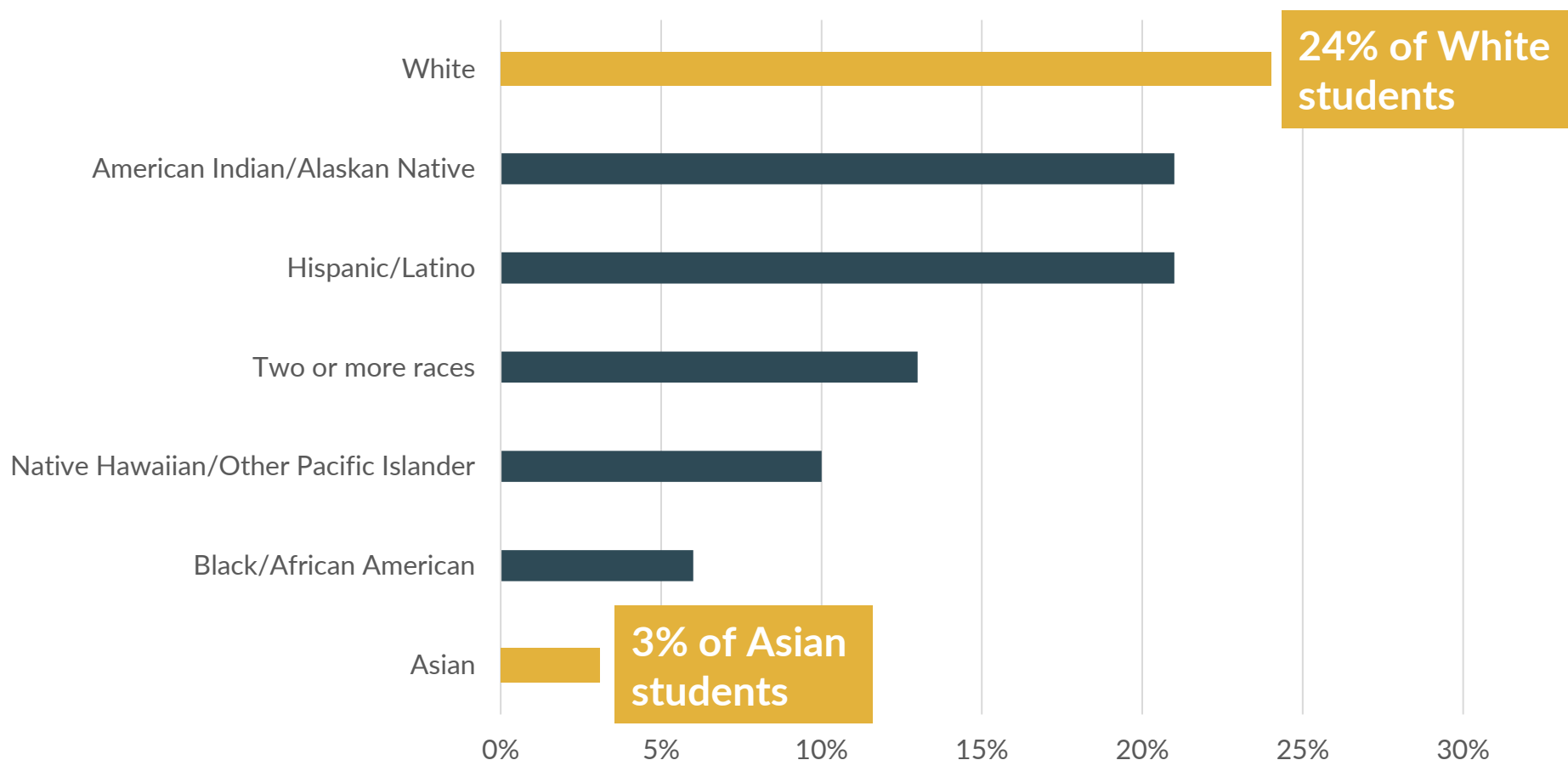
Hybrid

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



Public school enrollment declined, especially for White students

2019-20

1,195,960

2020-21

1,153,371

-42,589 students (3.6%)

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



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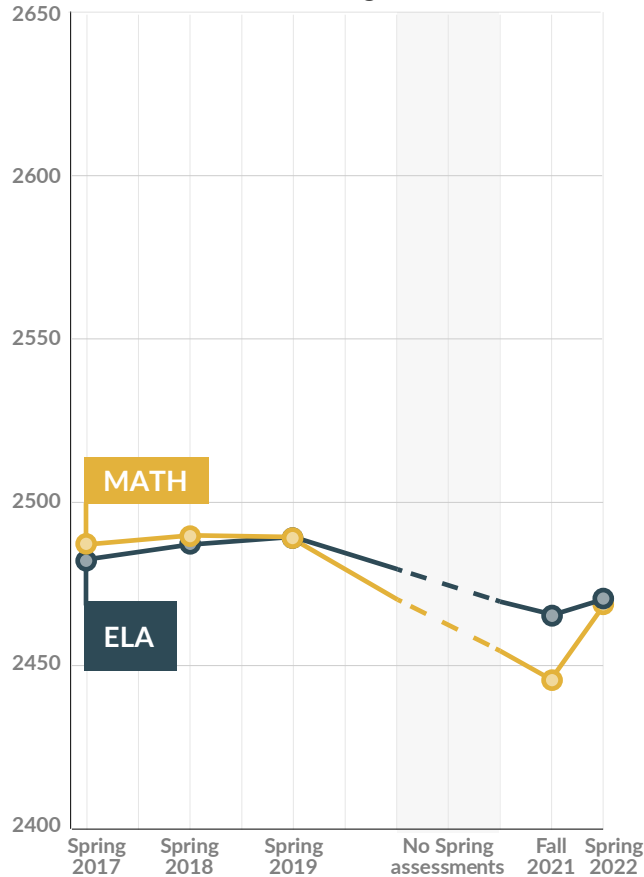
Staff analyzed annual standardized assessments

- 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.

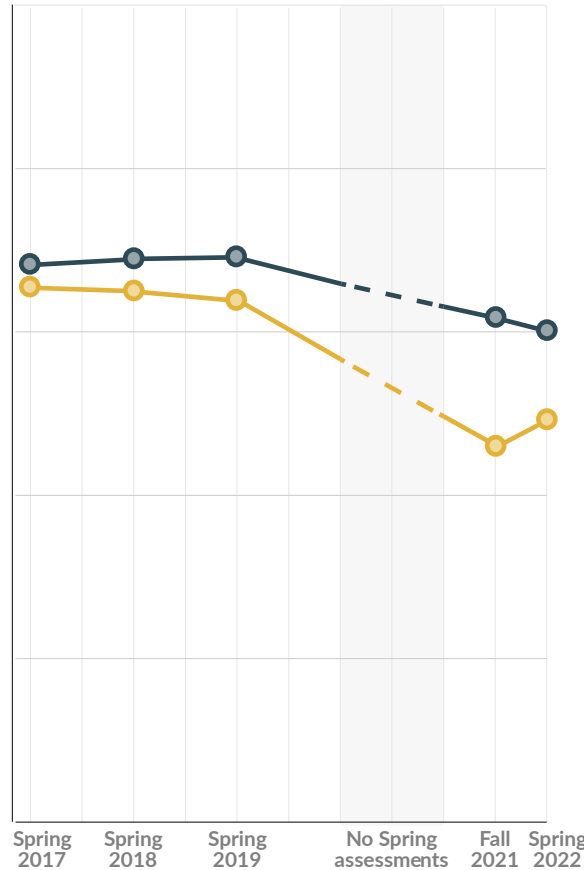


Average math and ELA scores declined from Spring 2019 to Spring 2022

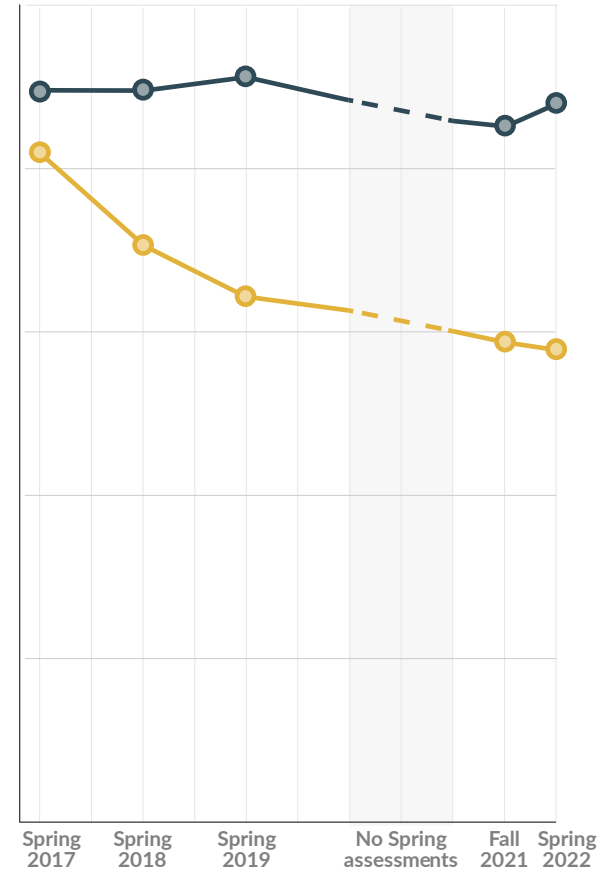
3rd - 5th grade



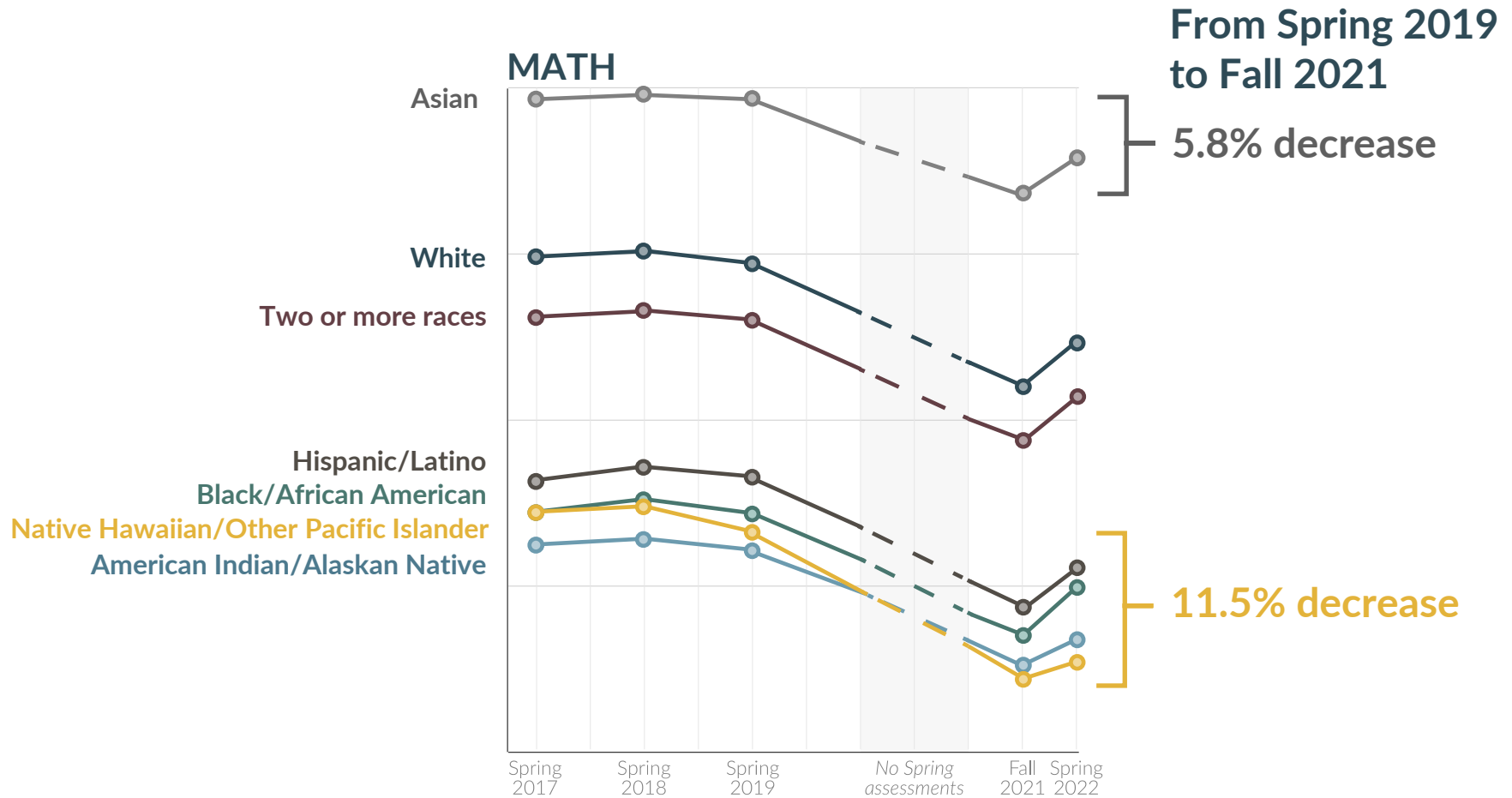
6th - 8th grade



10th grade

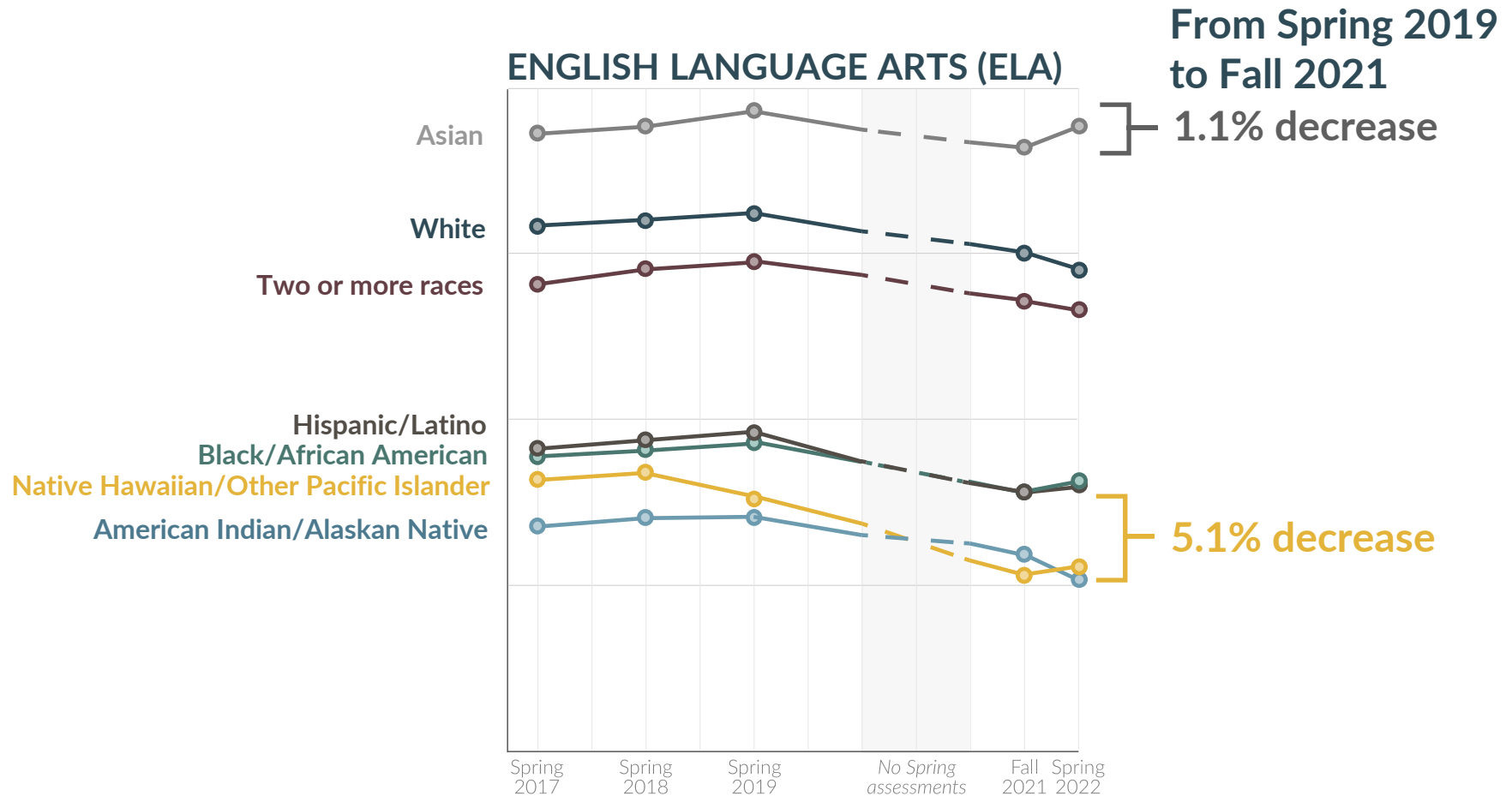


Scores declined for students of all races and ethnicities



None have recovered to pre-pandemic scores

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None have recovered to pre-pandemic scores

Assessment scores varied by other school and student characteristics

Variable	Spring 2019	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
School poverty level	-13% to -15%	-17% to -22%	-17% to -22%
Free and reduced-price lunch eligibility	-10% to -12%	-10% to -12%	-10% to -12%
In-person instruction		3% (math only)	3% (math only)



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Student substance use declined from 2018 to 2021 according to Healthy Youth Survey

Cigarette use

58% ↓

Alcohol use

45% ↓

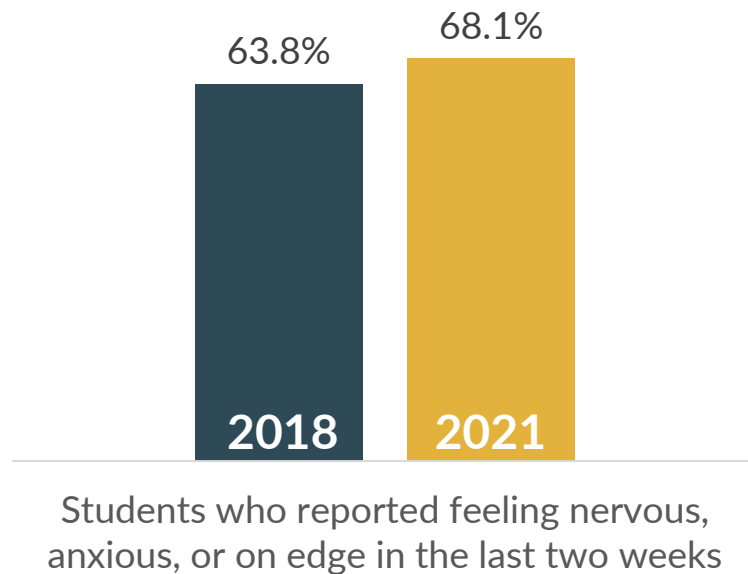
Marijuana use

47% ↓

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

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.

2019

Statewide: 75%

77% of teachers for White students were experienced.

68% to 75% of teachers for students of color were experienced

2021

Statewide: 80%

81% of teachers for White students were experienced.

75% to 79% of teachers for students of color were experienced.

Teachers reported challenges during the 2020-21 school year

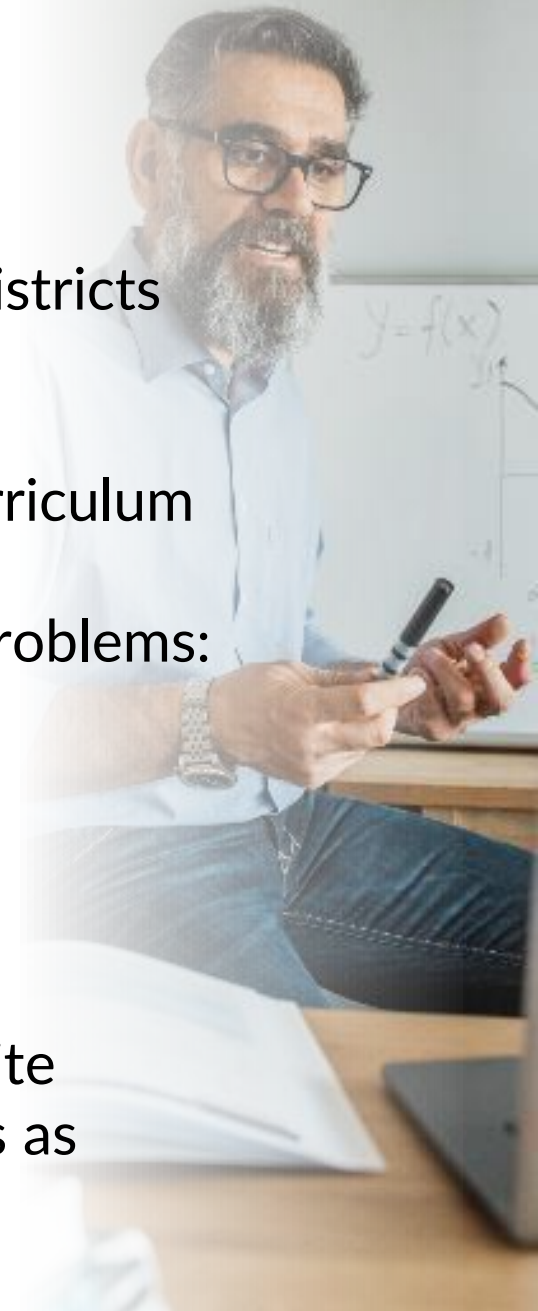
6,692 teachers from 1,475 schools in 228 school districts responded to JLARC staff survey

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





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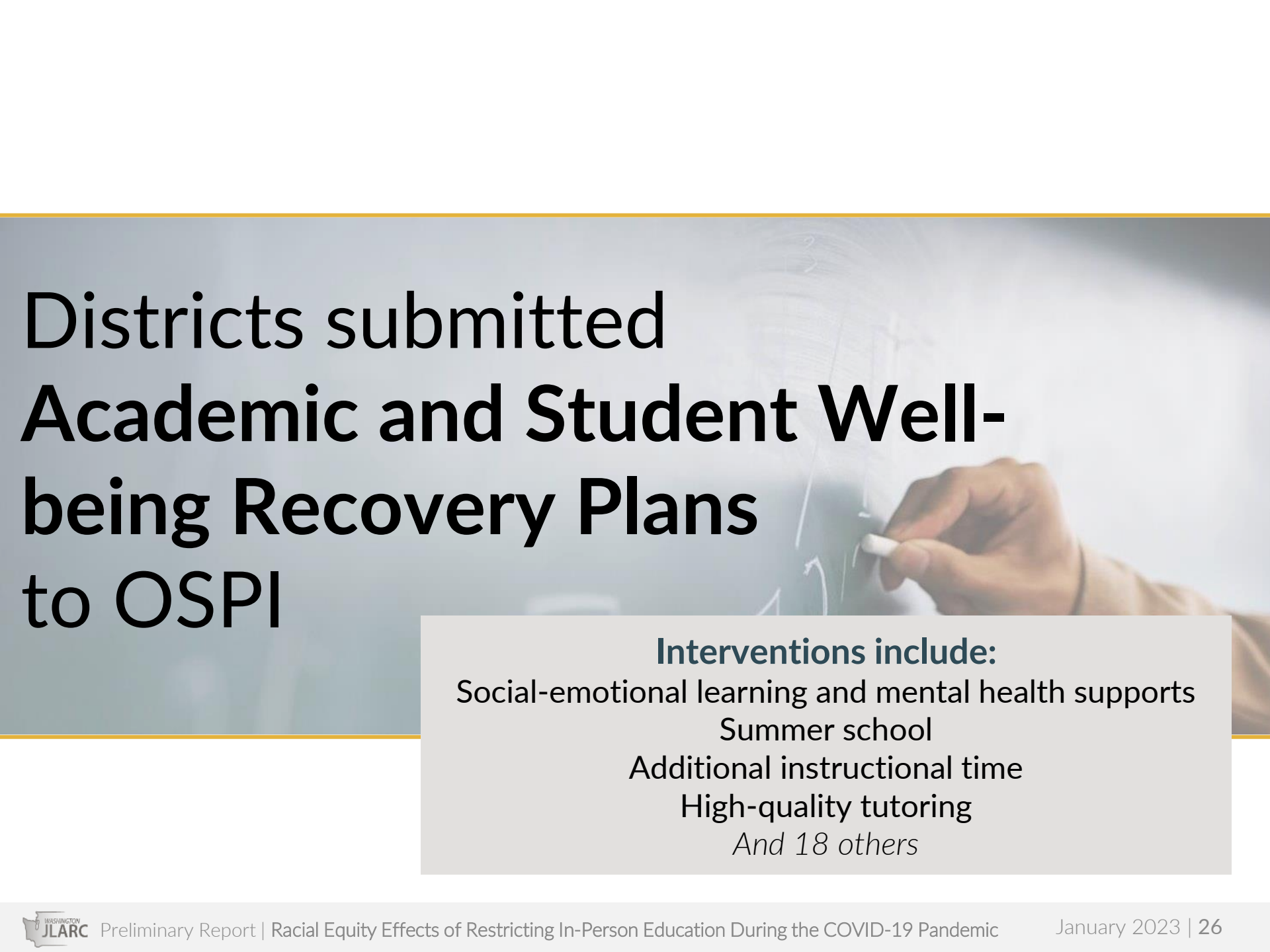
\$2.9 billion

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

Plan

*Reporting required
by 2021 Legislature
(ESHB 1368)*

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**

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.

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Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

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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





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