Expand strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism and disproportionate discipline

Dr. Patricia Ford (Executive Director, Student Services)
Tommy Usher (Chief of Schools)

One District. One Goal. Every Child.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Our Strength is Our Team
Atlanta's students will have effective and engaged teachers, leaders, and staff.
- Increase concentration of highly-effective teachers and leaders
- Prioritize engagement and retention for staff
- Grow and promote strong teachers, leaders, and staff

Our Responsibility Is Shared
Atlanta's students will have supportive families, communities, and partners.
- Build meaningful partnerships
- Expand Atlanta Partners for Education (APFE) impact
- Increase access and engagement for families and communities

Our System Is Efficient & Effective
Atlanta's students will have the schools and resources they need to succeed.
- Maximize facility usage for the student and community good
- Leverage data to drive strategic financial investments
- Implement sustainability initiatives

We Are Strengthening Our Instructional Core
Atlanta's students will have high-quality instruction, materials, and targeted support.
- Implement high-quality, relevant, and engaging instructional materials and professional learning in all core content areas
- Target resources towards subgroups (eg. exceptional education, English learners, economically-disadvantaged)
- Accelerate early learning

We Are Caring For Every Child
Atlanta's students will have trusted, supportive adults meeting their unique needs.
- Expand strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism and disproportionate discipline
- Implement systematic culture and climate strategies
- Increase student access to trusted and reliable adults (eg. mentors, coaches, counselors)

We Are Sparking Student Curiosity
Atlanta's students will have access to explore and expand their passions and interests.
- Promote robust arts, athletics, world language, and enrichment offerings
- Expand access to high-interest and workforce-ready offerings (e.g. career programs and pathways, advanced coursework)
- Explore specialized and innovative school models (eg. School of the Arts)

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Focus Area: We are Caring for Every Child

Objective: Expand strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism and disproportionate discipline

Key Performance Indicators

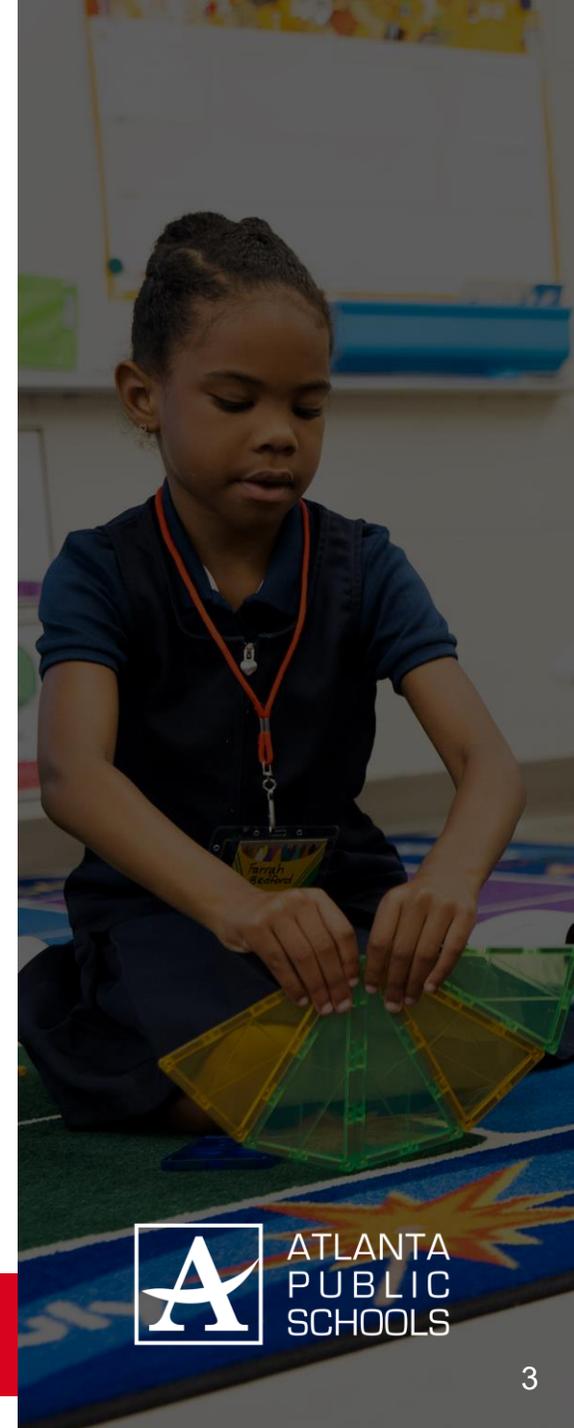| Actual (2025)		Target (2026)	Target (2030)
68.8%	**Absenteeism** % of students who are not chronically absent*	71%	80%
89.6%	**Discipline: All Students** % of all students without suspensions (OSS) *	90.7%	95%
86.4%	**Discipline: Black Students** % of Black students without suspensions (OSS)*	88.1%	95%
83.5%	**Discipline: Students with Disabilities** % of Students with Disabilities students without suspensions (OSS)*	85.8%	95%

* Includes Charter and Partner Schools

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Chronic Absenteeism

Academic Impact

Lower Reading and Math Achievement

Course Failure and Poor Grades

Reduced High School Graduation Rates

Weakened School Climate and Engagement
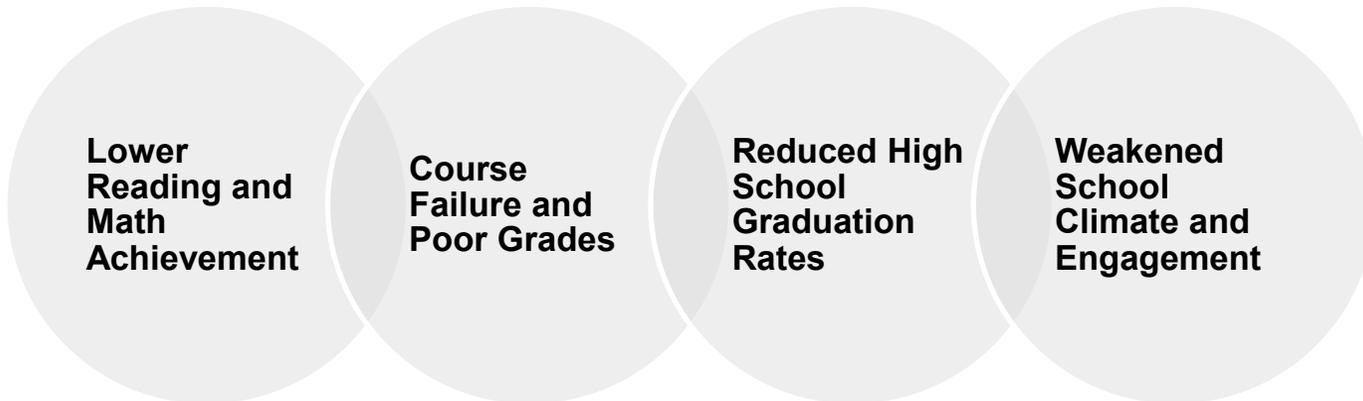
Root Causes

Truancy Prevention & Intervention Survey

1. Parent Engagement

2. Inclement Weather

3. Transportation

4. Out-of-Zone Residence

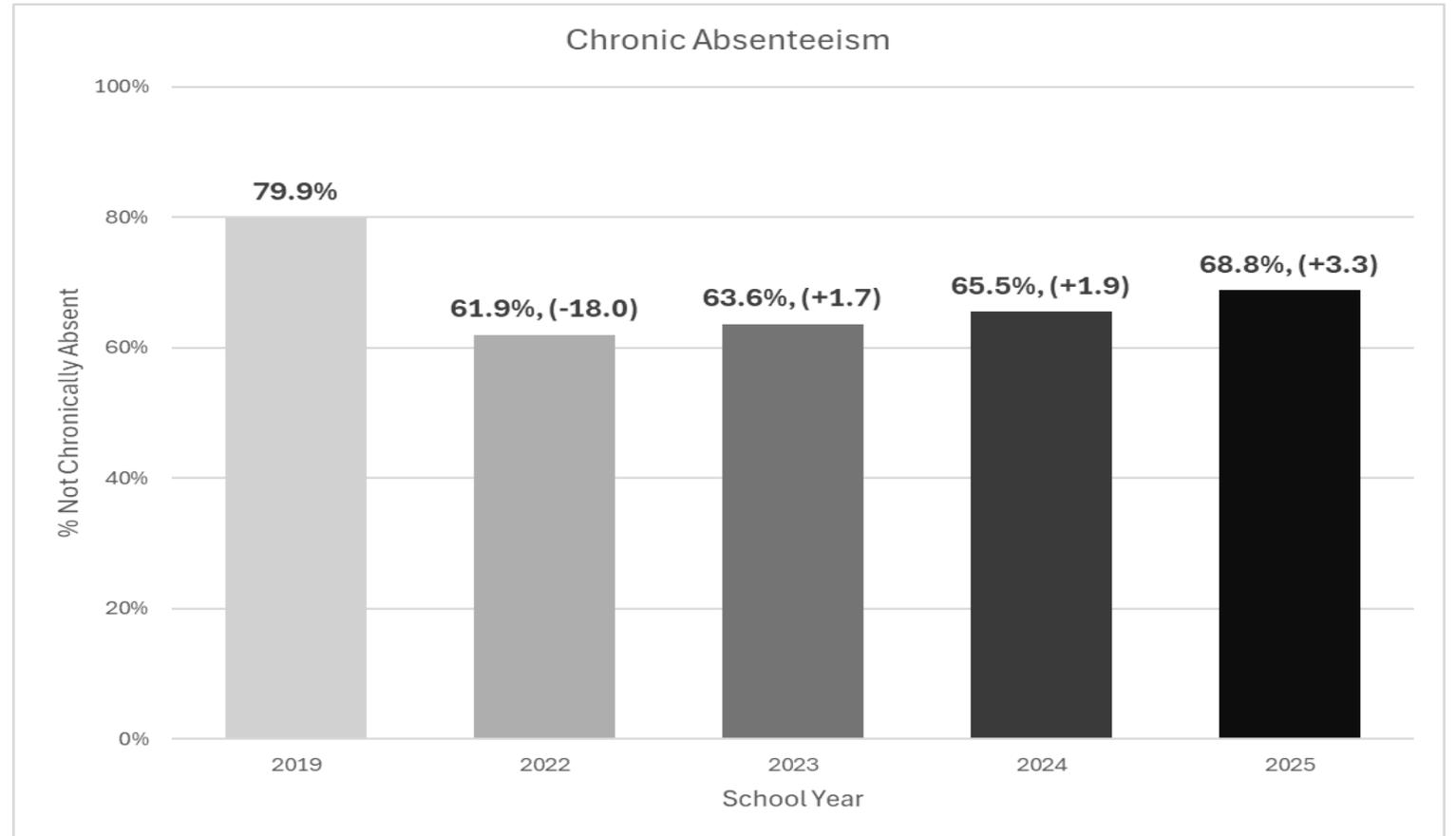5. Homeless Concerns

6. Health/Mental Health

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This shows Atlanta Public Schools has been increasing the percentage of students NOT Chronically Absent each year since the Pandemic.

Attendance KPI:

**% of Students Not Chronically Absent**

Not Chronically Absent:

the student was present for greater than 90% of school days

Chronic Absenteeism

- 2019: 79.9%
- 2022: 61.9%, (-18.0)
- 2023: 63.6%, (+1.7)
- 2024: 65.5%, (+1.9)
- 2025: 68.8%, (+3.3)

y-axis: % Not Chronically Absent

x-axis: School Year

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While Atlanta Public Schools has been addressing discipline practices with large decreases in hearings and suspensions, there remains a gap between white and black students.

16.3%
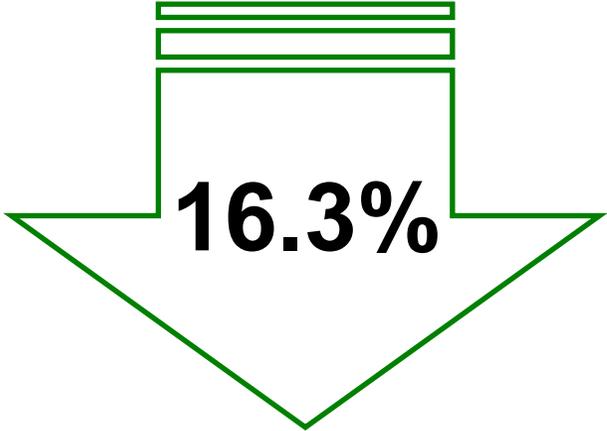
Decrease in disciplinary hearings

26.3%
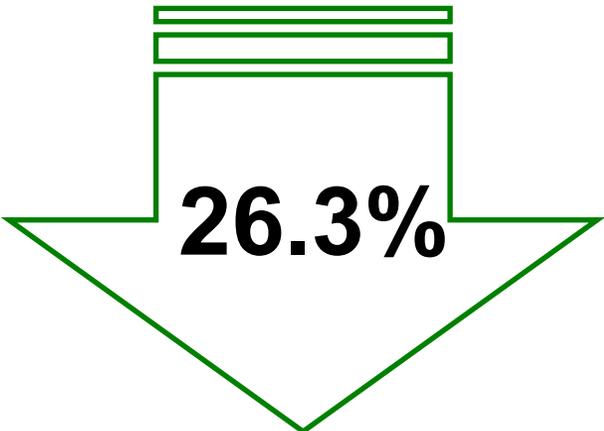
Decrease in suspension days

98.7%
White Students without Suspensions

12.3% Gap

86.4%
Black Students without Suspensions

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This shows the percentage of students without Out-of-School Suspension from 2019-2025.
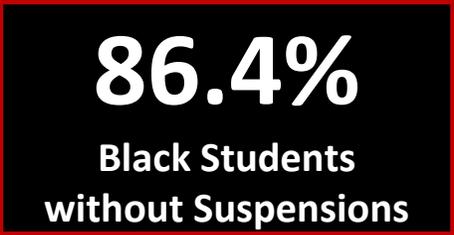Over the past year, we have increased the percent of students without suspension across all grade levels.

Students without Suspension

Level	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	YOY (24 to 25) % Not Suspended Change
APS Students – Percentage of Students Without Suspensions						
Elementary	96.7%	98.2%	96.9%	96.1%	97.1%	**1.0%**
Middle	85.4%	85.0%	79.6%	78.4%	80.6%	**2.2%**
High	85.5%	83.4%	82.4%	83.6%	83.8%	**0.2%**

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To address the root causes and support required for improved attendance and discipline practices, we reorganized focused on alignment, collaboration, intentionality, and accountability.

Student Services Team
Supports 2 Cluster Superintendents

- Social Work Coordinator
- Discipline Coordinator
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst*
- Student Intervention Coordinator
- Student Health & Wellness Coordinator*
- Family Engagement Liaison

Dr. Patricia Ford, Executive Director (Interim)

| **Student Discipline** Lincoln Woods, Director | **Social Work** Jacquelyn Anthony, Director | **Health & Wellness** Valencia Hildreth, Director | **Family Engagement** Crystal Serracin, Program Manager |

* One per Three Cluster Superintendents

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"Every Child Deserves a Champion"
‑ Rita Pierson
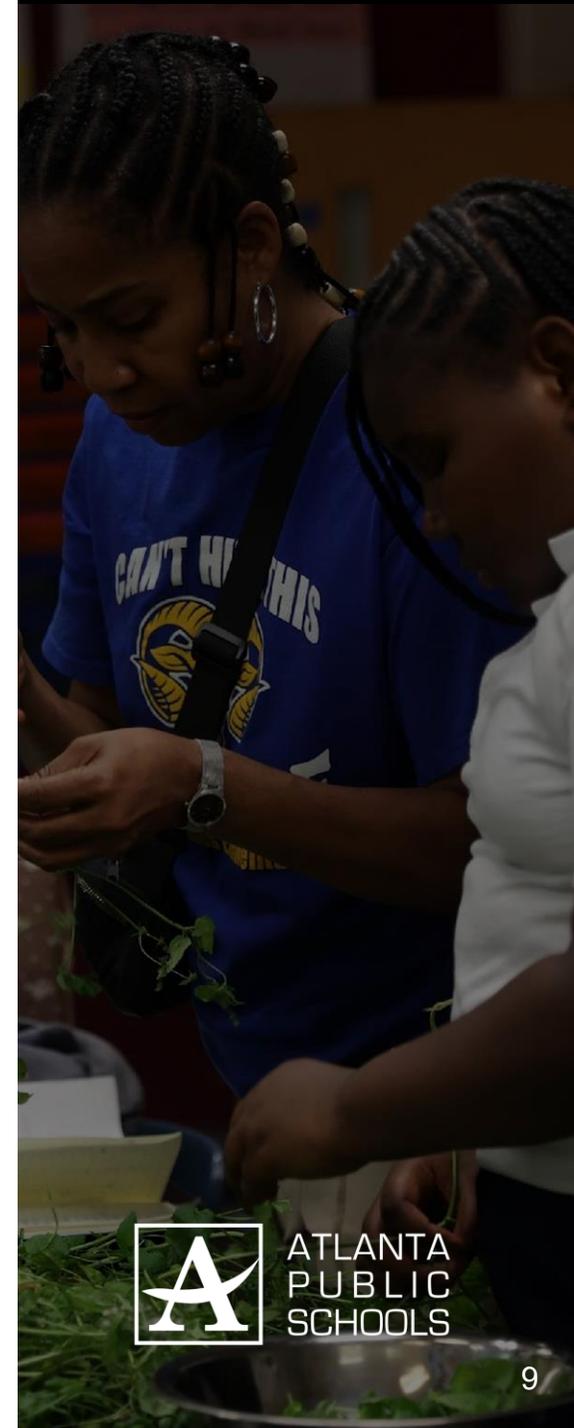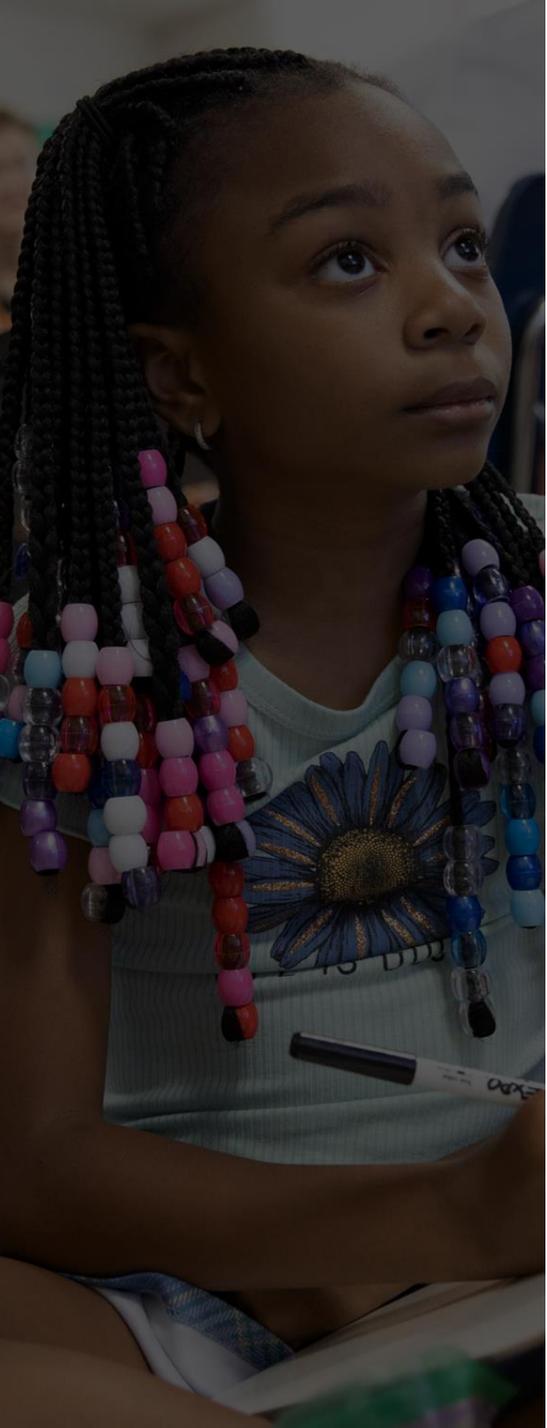
Focus Area: We are Caring for Every Child
Objective: Expand strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism and disproportionate discipline

Strategies

1 **Provide support to schools to prevent and mitigate student absenteeism**

2 **Use real-time data to identify and support students with barriers to improve regular attendance through tiered interventions.**

3 **Embed Restorative Practices (RP) as the foundation for behavior management, focusing on building relationships, repairing harm, and teaching social-emotional skills.**

Strengthen Prevention

Build a Culture of Showing Up

Engage Families and Students

Use Data to Drive Action
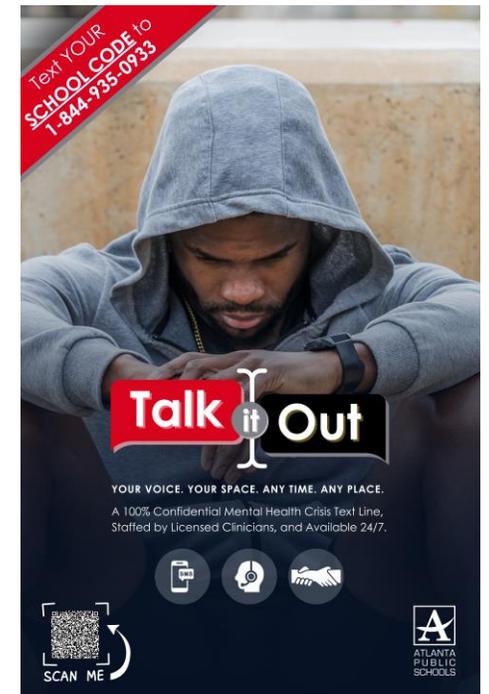
Strategy 1: Provide support to schools to prevent and mitigate absenteeism.

Next Steps

	Expected Completion
Identify and convene the District Attendance Review Team (DART) to review school attendance data, and uncover barriers/root causes	**On-going**
Monitor school-based attendance campaigns/celebrations	**On-going**
Create a customized School Attendance Support Plan	**January 2026**

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Strategy 2: Use real time data to identify and support students with barriers to improve regular attendance through tiered interventions.

Strengthen Early Intervention

Monitor and Adjust Interventions

Implement Tiered Supports

Connect Families to Resources

Implement Intensive Case Management and Reengagement

Coordinate Intensive Supports

Manage and Document Cases

Support Legal Action When Needed

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Strategy 2: Use real time data to identify and support students with barriers to improve regular attendance through tiered interventions.

Next Steps

	Expected Completion
Intensive case management, wraparound services, home visits, or referrals to community agencies (as needed)	**Ongoing**
Provide ongoing training to staff on data dashboards to flag students with emerging or chronic absenteeism	**Ongoing**
Share reports with district leadership and community partners to align resources	**On-going**

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Strategy 3: Embed Restorative Practices (RP) as the foundation for behavior management, focusing on building relationships, repairing harm, and teaching social-emotional skills.

Connection Over Consequence: A New Approach to School Discipline

Examples

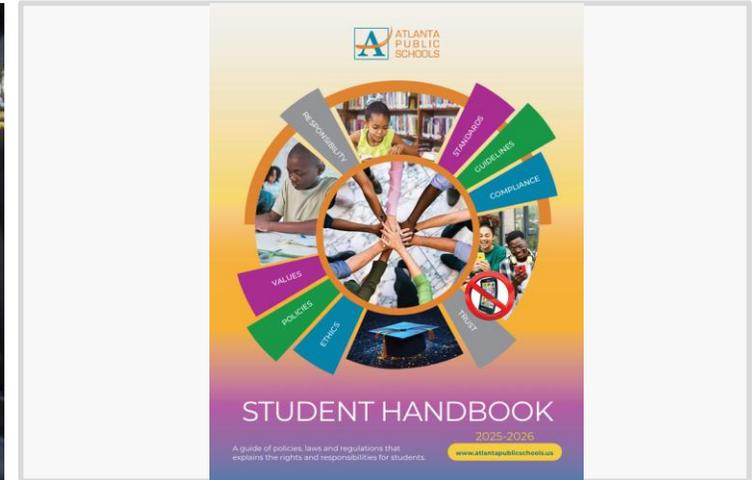**Structured opportunities for students** to connect with peers and staff (e.g., advisory periods, peer mentoring)

Partnered with the At-Promise Center Intervention Program to allow students to attend in lieu of out of school suspension

Updated Student Handbook by revising discipline policies to assist in eliminating subjective or exclusionary practices

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Strategy 3: Embed Restorative Practices (RP) as the foundation for behavior management, focusing on building relationships, repairing harm, and teaching social-emotional skills.

Next Steps

	Expected Completion
Conduct Root Cause Analysis by investigating underlying causes to include taking a deep look at inconsistent enforcement of policies, gaps in supports, patterns of overrepresentation in referrals and data by subgroups.	**September 2025**
Create a clear Restorative Practices Framework to develop restorative discipline protocols (e.g., circle processes, meditation & restorative conferences)	**January 2026**

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THANK YOU!

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APPENDIX

One District. One Goal. Every Child.

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Atlanta Public Schools has been increasing the percentage of students NOT Chronically Absent each year since the Pandemic.

Chronic Absenteeism
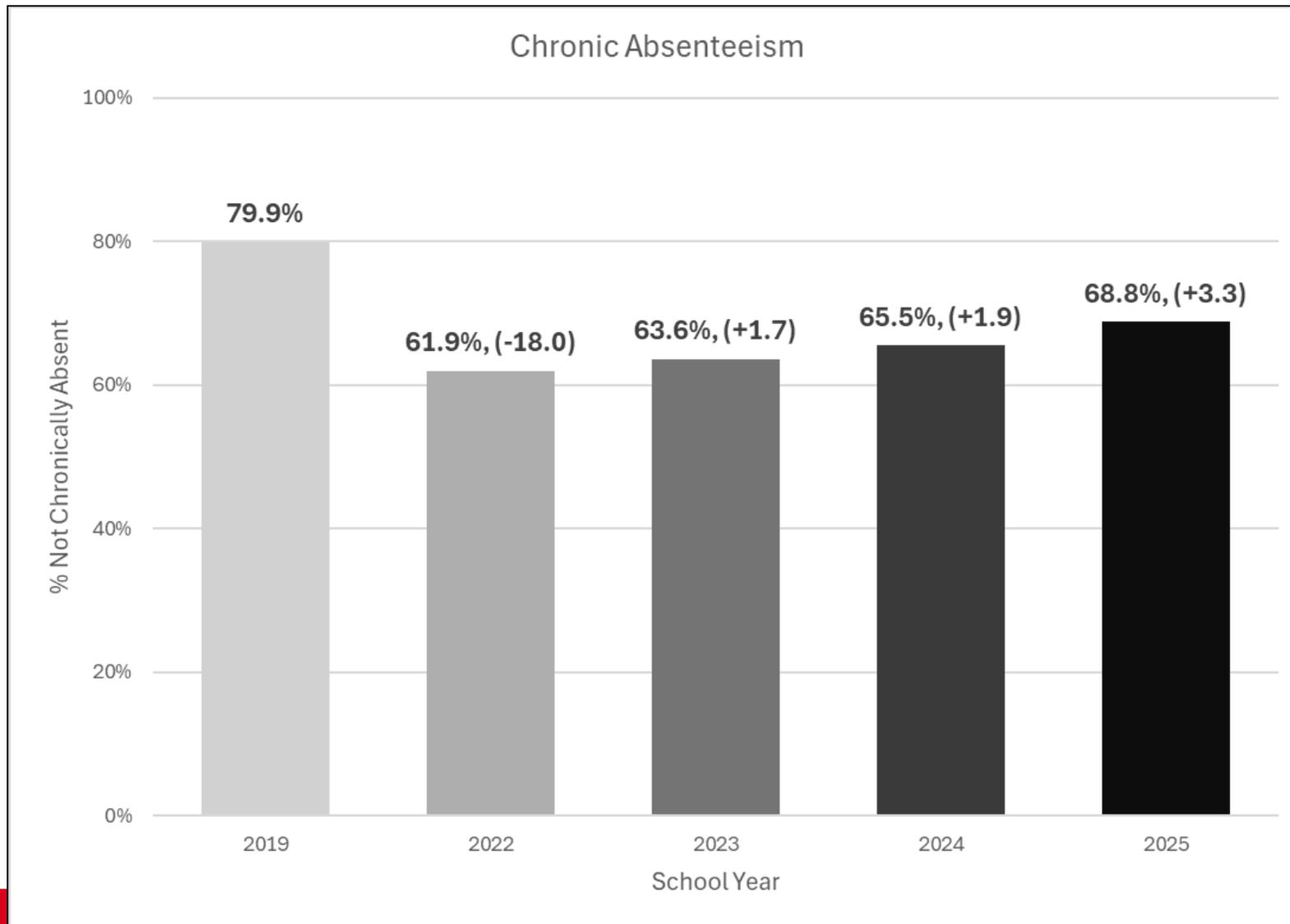
Atlanta Public Schools continues to close the gap with the state with students NOT Chronically absent.
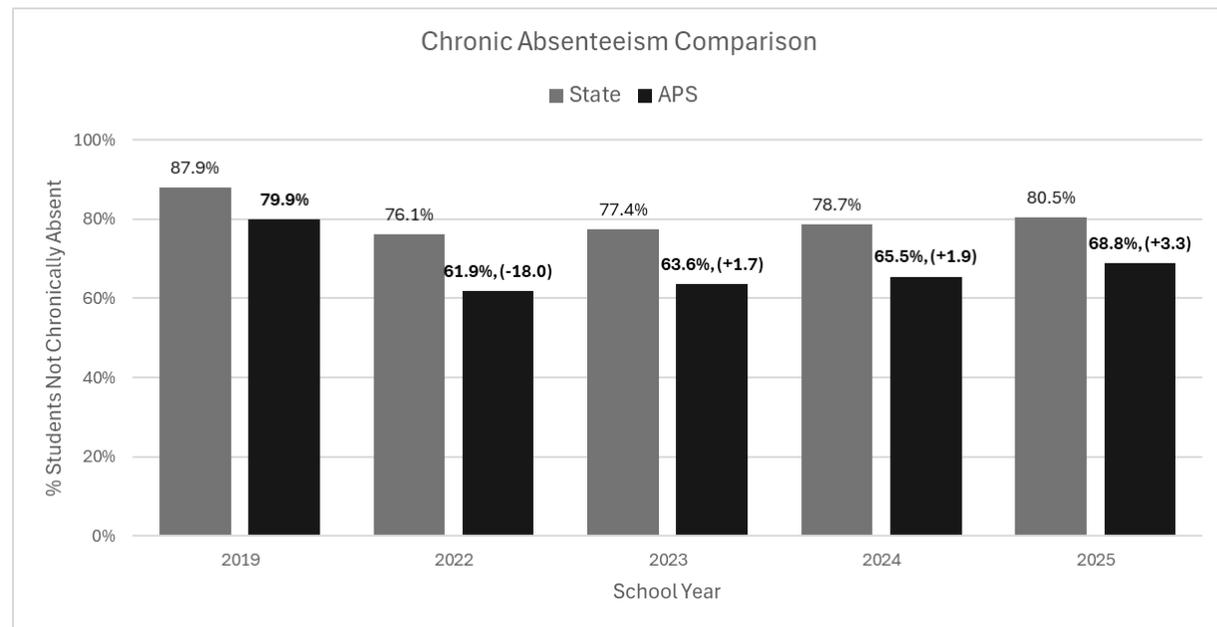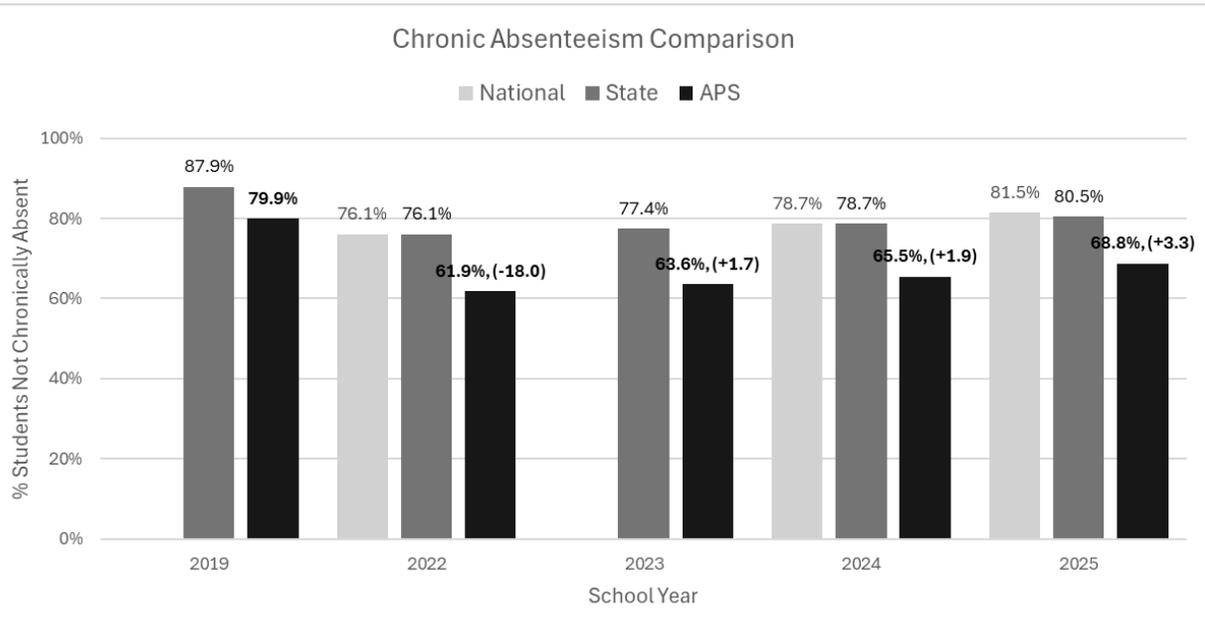
Cannot confirm national numbers for SY19 and SY23
National Source: https://gadoe.org/press-releases/chronic-absenteeism-reaches-lowest-levels-since-pre-pandemic-as-state-continues-efforts-to-reduce-absence-rates/

State source: https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/dashboards/attendance/

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APS had highest YOY increase of any Metro district for % students NOT Chronically Absent. There is still work to do as APS has the lowest rate among all Metro Districts.

Students NOT Chronically Absent KPI Results by State and Metro Districts			
Sytem	% Not Chronically Absent 2024	% Not Chronically Absent 2025	YOY Percent NOT Chronically Absent Change
State	78.7%	80.5%	1.8%
Atlanta Public Schools	65.5%	68.8%	3.3%
Dekalb	71.2%	74.1%	2.9%
Douglas	74.3%	77.1%	2.8%
Gwinnett	80.1%	82.4%	2.3%
Cobb	81.9%	83.9%	2.0%
Fulton	80.3%	81.3%	1.0%
Clayton	71.1%	71.6%	0.5%
Marietta City	76.8%	77.2%	0.4%

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Almost all subgroups showed improvement in Attendance YOY.
SWD and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups had the largest YOY gains.

APS Students NOT Chronically Absent KPI Results by Subgroup			
Subgroup	% Not Chronically Absent 2024	% Not Chronically Absent 2025	YOY Percent NOT Chronically Absent Change
Students with Disability	57.9%	63.1%	5.2%
English Learners	73.1%	76.1%	3.0%
Economically Disadvantaged	57.9%	62.8%	4.9%
Black	58.4%	61.7%	3.3%
White	91.9%	93.4%	1.5%
Hispanic	70.9%	75.5%	4.6%
Asian	87.6%	86.2%	-1.4%
Multi-Racial	78.2%	80.8%	2.6%
American Indian/Pacific Islander	61.2%	56.9%	-4.3%
Male	65.4%	68.9%	3.5%
Female	65.6%	68.7%	3.1%

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Chronic Absenteeism by Cluster and Year, % of Students NOT Chronically Absent

APS Students % NOT Chronically Absent KPI Results by Cluster						
Cluster	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	YOY (24 to 25) % NOT Chronically Absent Change
Carver	79.6%	59.4%	53.3%	53.6%	57.4%	3.8%
Douglass	63.4%	43.4%	42.5%	48.8%	54.6%	5.8%
Jackson	75.6%	59.2%	65.8%	67.4%	71.9%	4.5%
Mays	72.5%	49.4%	51.0%	51.9%	52.7%	0.8%
Midtown	89.7%	83.2%	79.6%	83.9%	85.8%	1.9%
North Atlanta	89.8%	77.9%	77.1%	77.7%	81.8%	4.1%
Single Gender	68.9%	54.3%	56.6%	63.5%	71.8%	8.3%
South Atlanta	72.1%	45.1%	50.9%	53.0%	53.8%	0.8%
Therrell	75.9%	52.3%	56.6%	56.7%	59.5%	2.8%
Washington	69.6%	46.5%	51.1%	46.7%	52.9%	6.2%

Reminder that Single Gender Schools are only grades 6-12

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Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Band and Year, % of Students NOT Chronically Absent

APS Students % NOT Chronically Absent KPI Results by Grade Band						
Grade Band	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	YOY (24 to 25) % NOT Chronically Absent Change
Elementary	**82.0%**	**64.5%**	**67.0%**	**69.3%**	**72.0%**	**2.7%**
Middle	**79.2%**	**60.7%**	**61.7%**	**62.6%**	**65.5%**	**2.9%**
High	**66.0%**	**51.2%**	**51.5%**	**54.0%**	**60.2%**	**6.2%**
*Charter and Partner Schools removed for this Analysis						

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Discipline Data

KPI = % of Students Not Suspended (No OSS)

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Atlanta Public Schools showed an increase in students without OSS YOY

Students without Suspension

2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
91.5%	91.1%, (-0.4)	88.9%, (-2.2)	88.5%, (-0.4)	89.6%, (+1.1)
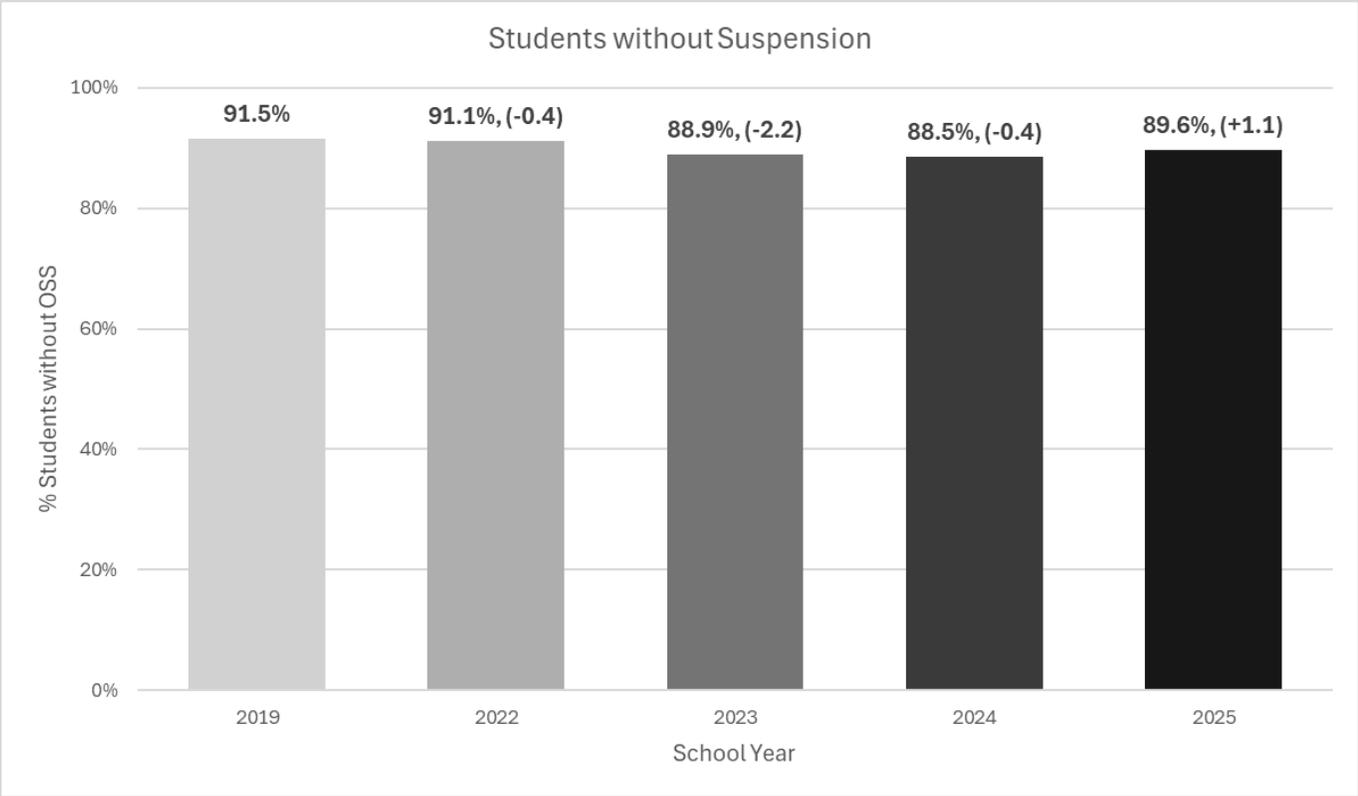
APS Percentage of Students Without Suspensions

Grade Band	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	YOY(24 to 25)% Not Suspended Change
Elementary	96.7%	98.2%	96.9%	96.1%	97.1%	1.0%
Middle	85.4%	85.0%	79.6%	78.4%	80.6%	2.2%
High	85.5%	83.4%	82.4%	83.6%	83.8%	0.2%

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Black Students without Suspension

% Students without OSS | School Year

- 2019: 89.2%
- 2022: 88.6%, (-0.6)
- 2023: 85.7%, (-2.9)
- 2024: 85.2%, (-0.5)
- 2025: 86.4%, (+1.2)

SWD Students without Suspension

% Students without OSS | School Year

- 2019: 84.9%
- 2022: 84.4%, (-0.5)
- 2023: 81.6%, (-2.8)
- 2024: 82.1%, (+0.5)
- 2025: 83.0%, (+0.9)

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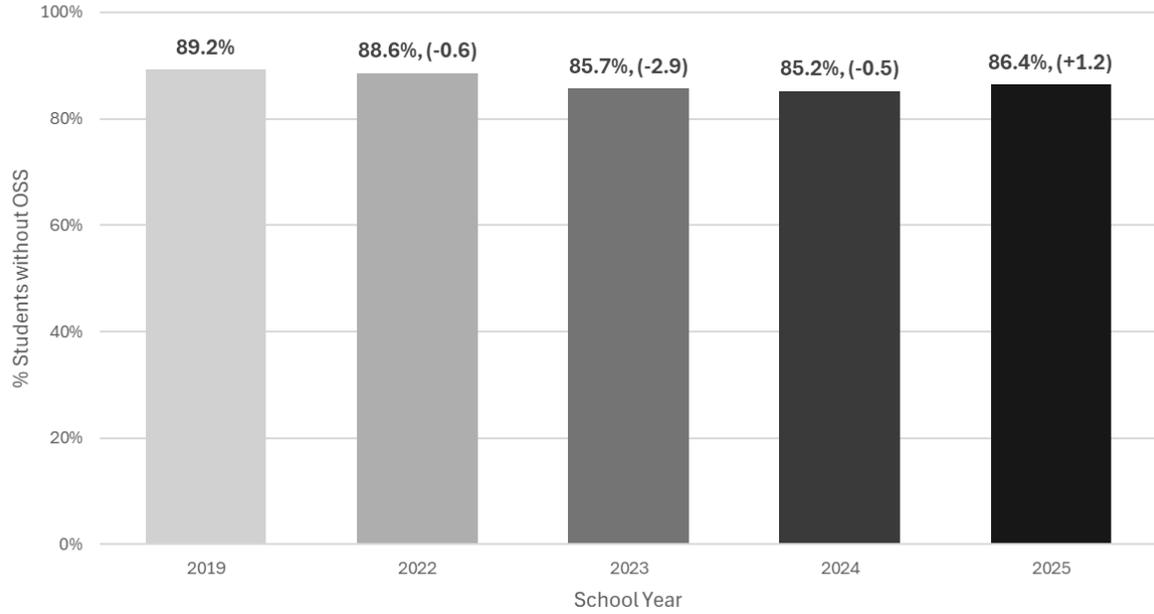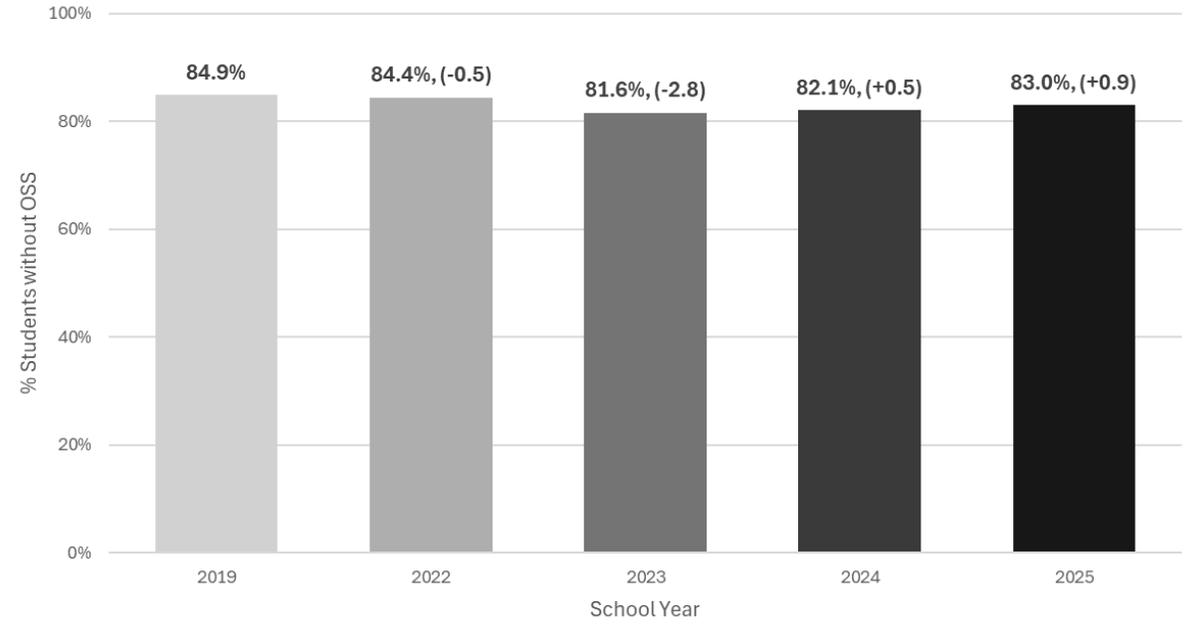
Elementary School Percentage of Students without Suspensions
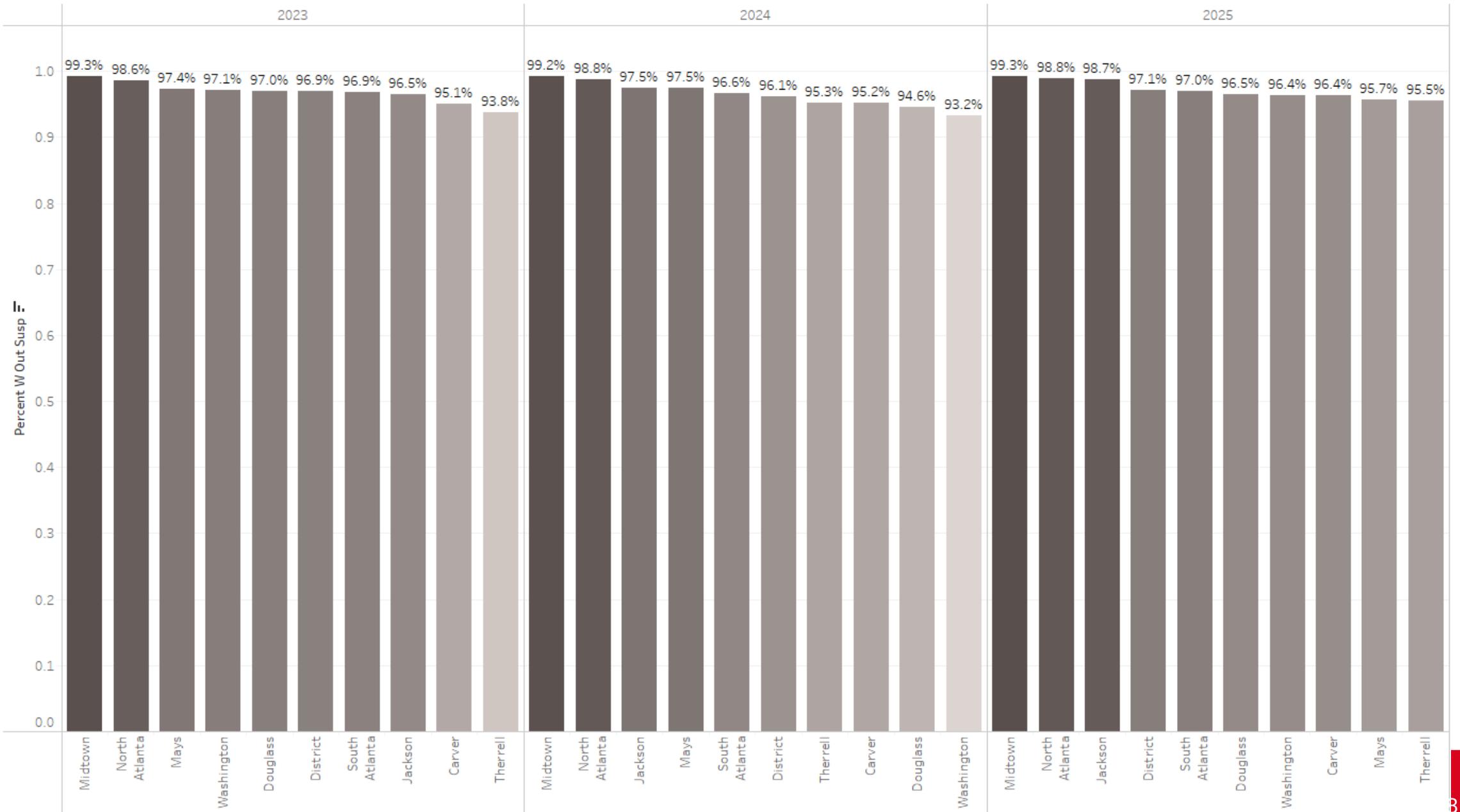
Percentage of Middle and High School Students without Suspensions (OSS)

2023
- Midtown: 92.2%
- North Atlanta: 91.9%
- Jackson: 84.7%
- Single Gender: 83.4%
- Washington: 82.2%
- District: 81.1%
- Carver: 75.3%
- South Atlanta: 73.4%
- Therrell: 72.6%
- Mays: 69.6%
- Douglass: 68.4%

2024
- Midtown: 92.1%
- North Atlanta: 91.4%
- Jackson: 85.3%
- District: 81.2%
- Single Gender: 79.2%
- Washington: 79.2%
- Therrell: 78.6%
- South Atlanta: 78.2%
- Carver: 74.0%
- Mays: 67.5%
- Douglass: 65.8%

2025
- Midtown: 92.9%
- North Atlanta: 92.1%
- Jackson: 86.0%
- District: 82.4%
- Single Gender: 80.6%
- Washington: 80.3%
- Therrell: 80.2%
- South Atlanta: 76.2%
- Carver: 75.7%
- Douglass: 72.8%
- Mays: 71.2%

%No OSS

Percent of Students without Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity
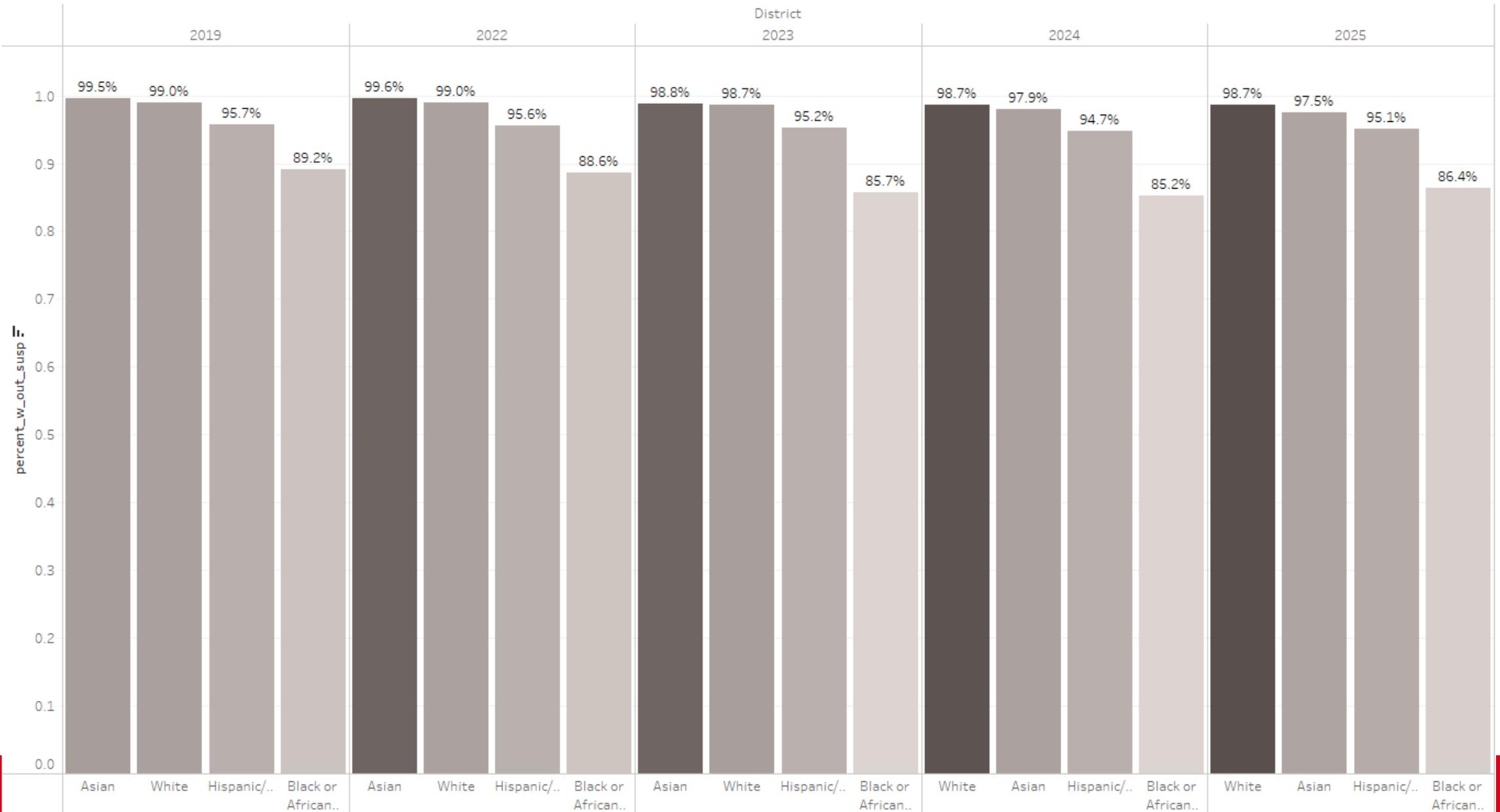
Percentage of Students without Suspensions by Cluster Year over Year
(Gradient is Relative to District Percentage SY25)

cluster	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Carver	92.5%	91.6%	82.9%	82.6%	83.6%
District	91.5%	91.1%	88.9%	88.5%	89.6%
Douglass	86.0%	83.8%	82.5%	79.7%	83.9%
Jackson	89.8%	92.2%	90.0%	90.9%	91.7%
Mays	93.3%	86.0%	81.9%	80.7%	82.1%
Midtown	96.0%	96.4%	95.6%	95.6%	96.0%
North Atlanta	96.4%	95.8%	95.2%	95.1%	95.4%
Single Gender	80.7%	82.2%	83.4%	79.2%	80.6%
South Atlanta	90.7%	88.0%	84.8%	87.2%	86.2%
Therrell	87.6%	83.5%	82.6%	86.4%	87.4%
Washington	91.4%	90.2%	89.4%	85.9%	88.1%

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% of Students with no Out of School Suspensions - SY2024-2025

		%
All Students	All Students	89%
Grade	KK	98%
	01	98%
	02	97%
	03	97%
	04	96%
	05	94%
	06	81%
	07	79%
	08	80%
	09	77%
	10	82%
	11	86%
	12	91%
Gender	Female	91%
	Male	87%
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	88%
	Asian	97%
	Black or African American	86%
	Hispanic	95%
	Multi-Racial	96%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	93%
	White	98%
Students with Disabilities	Students With Disabilities	83%
	Not Students With Disabilities	90%
Economically Disadvantaged	Economically Disadvantaged	85%
	Not Economically Disadvantaged	95%

		%
Cluster	Carver	83%
	Douglass	83%
	Jackson	90%
	Mays	82%
	Midtown	96%
	North Atlanta	95%
	South Atlanta	86%
	Therrell	87%
	Washington	88%
	Single Gender	80%
	Other	96%
	Partner	86%
	Charter	91%
Carver	Perkerson	98%
	Finch	94%
	Carver Early	86%
	Sylvan	64%
Douglass	Usher-Collier	99%
	Scott	98%
	Harper-Archer ES	96%
	Boyd	95%
	FL Stanton	86%
	Douglass	74%
	Invictus	69%
Jackson	Toomer	99%
	Parkside	99%
	Burgess	99%
	Benteen	98%
	Dunbar	97%
	BAMO	95%
	Jackson High	87%
	King	75%
Mays	West Manor	98%
	Peyton Forest	97%
	Cascade	97%
	Beecher	96%
	Mays	72%
	Miles	91%
	Young	69%

		%
Midtown	Hope-Hill	98%
	Lin	99%
	Morningside	99%
	Springdale Park	99%
	VHE	99%
	Howard	92%
	Midtown	92%
North Atlanta	Smith	99%
	Brandon	99%
	Jackson Elementary	98%
	E Rivers	98%
	Bolton	98%
	Garden Hills	97%
	North Atlanta	93%
	Sutton	90%
South Atlanta	Hutchinson	98%
	Cleveland	98%
	Heritage	97%
	Dobbs	96%
	Humphries	92%
	South Atlanta	80%
	Long	69%
Therrell	Continental	96%
	Kimberly	95%
	Deerwood	95%
	Fickett	94%
	Bunche	81%
	Therrell	78%
Washington	Tuskegee	99%
	Jones	97%
	Hollis	85%
	Washington	85%
	H Russell	72%
Single Gender	CSK	87%
	BEST MS/HS	71%
Other	Hank Aaron	96%

		%
Partner	Gideons	99%
	Slater	96%
	KIPP Woodson Park	89%
	Price	87%
	Carver STEAM	67%
Charter	Westside	99%
	Classical	99%
	ANCS Elementary	98%
	Drew Elementary	97%
	KIPP Vision Primary	95%
	KIPP Soul Primary	95%
	ANCS Middle	95%
	Wesley	94%
	KIPP STRIVE Primary	93%
	Kindezi O4W	93%
	Centennial	92%
	KIPP WAYS Primary	91%
	Drew Secondary	90%
	Kindezi	89%
	KIPP Vision	87%
	KIPP WAYS	82%
	KIPP STRIVE	78%
	KIPP Soul	76%
	KIPP Collegiate	75%

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