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**KIDS FIRST  
CHICAGO**

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## **How Are CPS Students Doing? New Annual Progress Report Explores Trends in Academics, Attendance, and Well-Being**

*Data-Driven Insights on CPS Student Outcomes Five Years after COVID-19*

Chicago, IL – Today, Kids First Chicago (K1C) released a new digital annual progress report, [\*The State of Chicago Public Schools: A Comprehensive Look at CPS Students\*](#). This analysis examines Chicago Public Schools (CPS) student outcomes from 2018 to 2024, offering a data-driven comparison of student academic performance, absenteeism, and social-emotional well-being before and after the pandemic. The report also highlights key parent engagement metrics, providing insight into how families are involved in their children’s education.

With this report, K1C offers an objective look at students’ realities, ensuring parents and policymakers have the insights necessary to make informed and equitable decisions.

“We need to know how our students are doing to support them,” said Daniel Anello, CEO of Kids First Chicago. “Five years ago, COVID-19 upended our lives in so many ways. All stakeholders deserve a clear and objective look at the academic and social-emotional trends impacting our students.”

### **Report Overview & Key Findings**

The report is divided into five parts: (1) Student Demographics, (2) Elementary Student Outcomes, (3) High School Student Outcomes, (4) Chronic Absenteeism, and (5) Student Well-being.

Key findings include:

#### **(1) Student Demographics**

- The report highlights that CPS serves a diverse, high-needs population, underscoring the importance of inclusive, data-driven strategies for student success.

#### **(2) Elementary Student Educational Outcomes**

- In 2024, only one-third of CPS elementary students are considered proficient in English and Language Arts (ELA), and roughly one-fifth are proficient in math, according to Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) scores.
- After declining during the pandemic, IAR ELA proficiency is now 4 percentage points above 2019 levels, while math proficiency has dropped 6 points below 2019 levels and shows signs of stagnation.
- Large racial disparities persist in both ELA and math proficiency, with White and Asian students scoring 30–40 percentage points higher than Black and Latine students. This gap has remained relatively unchanged over the last six years.

- Current IAR growth percentiles suggest CPS elementary students are improving at a rate similar to the statewide average.
- ***Kids First Chicago’s analysis underscores the importance of focusing on math for all Elementary students and doubling down on additional support for Black and Latine students.***

### (3) High School Student Outcomes

- According to the 2024 Illinois Report Card, roughly one-fifth of CPS students are proficient in SAT reading (22%) and SAT math (19%).
- Neither reading nor math scores have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels; reading proficiency is 4 points below 2019, while math proficiency is 7 points lower and continues to decline.
- Racial disparities are evident in SAT proficiency: only 7% of Black students and 15% of Latine students were proficient in math, compared to 52% of White students and 61% of Asian students.
- In 2024, 29% of CPS students passed Algebra 1 in 8th grade, 84% were considered on track to graduate in 9th grade, and 81% of students graduated high school in four years. *Passing Algebra 1 in 8th grade is a strong predictor of future academic success, as it opens access to higher-level math courses in high school, which are often required for college readiness. Similarly, being on track in 9th grade—measured by earning enough credits and passing core courses—is one of the strongest indicators of whether a student will graduate on time.*
- ***Kids First Chicago’s analysis shows that CPS students are graduating at high rates, but the majority do not have the math skills needed to succeed in college.***

### (4) Chronic Absenteeism

- In 2024, roughly 40% of CPS students were chronically absent (as defined by missing at least 10% of school days), up from 25% in 2019.
- Chronic absenteeism rates are higher in high school, from 48% in 9th grade to 69% in 12th grade.
- ***Kids First Chicago’s analysis suggests a significant negative relationship between chronic absenteeism and both standardized test scores (at the elementary and high school levels) and 4-year graduation rates.***

### (5) Well-being

- The 5Essentials survey shows students report decreased perceptions of parent support, safety, and emotional health since the pandemic.
- Findings from the CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) survey reveal that 2 in 5 students consistently feel sad or hopeless, and 1 in 8 report having made a plan to attempt suicide within the past year.
- Teachers surveyed in 5Essentials note fewer classroom disruptions but lower trust and involvement from parents post-pandemic.
- ***Kids First Chicago’s analysis suggests a significant positive relationship between teachers’ perception of parent involvement and standardized test scores at both the elementary and high school levels.***

“Understanding attendance, academic performance, and social-emotional health is essential to guiding effective interventions,” said Robin Steans, President of Advance Illinois. “These findings underscore the urgent need to invest in the whole child—academically and socially-emotionally.”

## Join a K1C Data Briefing

Kids First Chicago will host conversations with partners to explore what these findings mean for CPS students and schools. These discussions will help shape strategies to improve student outcomes across the district. We invite CPS parents, members of the media, and interested partners to join us for one of these upcoming sessions:

*The Living Room (La Sala)* Virtual Learning Series – OPEN TO ALL

- **Tuesday, April 15**, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm [[Register here](#), English Only]
- **Wednesday, April 16**, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm [[Register here](#), Spanish Only]

*The State of Chicago Public Schools* Data Briefing – OPEN TO ALL

- **Thursday, April 24**, 8:30 am–10:00 am [[Register here](#), English Only]

## Explore the Report Series

Access the interactive report at [kidsfirstchicago.org/state-of-cps](https://kidsfirstchicago.org/state-of-cps). The report will soon be available in Spanish and updated annually.

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## ABOUT KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

Kids First Chicago's mission is to dramatically improve education for Chicago's children by ensuring their families are the respected authorities on what their kids need and decision-makers in their kids' education. We do this by partnering with families to support them in gaining the resources, access, and voice they need to achieve their vision for their children. K1C provides transparent and rigorous education analysis to families, educators, and policymakers alike to inform data-driven and inclusive decision-making about the future of Chicago's public schools. Visit [kidsfirstchicago.org](https://kidsfirstchicago.org).