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MISSOURI EDUCATION PROFILE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The PRIME Center is pleased to present the 2023 Missouri Education Profile. This year's profile offers an in-depth first look at education data following COVID-19 shutdowns, describing Missouri's teacher workforce, students and their academic achievement and college enrollment, and the state's education spending.

Unless otherwise specified, we utilized data from Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for state-level numbers and trends and information from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for comparisons between Missouri, border states, and the nation. Additionally, our data only covers public K-12 schools, so we don't capture trends for pre-K or private schools.

Our research shows some important things have changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we highlight three new trends:

- Missouri is hiring more new teachers, but fewer candidates are completing teacher preparation programs.
- Student attendance rates dropped to the lowest point in the last decade, while student discipline rates rose to their highest levels in the same time period.
- Missouri students scored slightly lower on state tests in math and reading, and along with their peers nationwide, significantly lower on national math and reading tests.

Over this same period, some key pre-COVID-19 trends remained steady:

- Missouri's average teacher pay remains much lower than national and regional salaries.
- A vast majority of teachers in Missouri and nationwide are White, disproportionate to student racial demographics.
- School enrollment continues to decline, along with the percentage of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL).
- Achievement gaps in state test scores remain unchanged, as the proportion of students who achieved Proficient and Advanced was higher for White students than it was for Black students, by roughly 30 percentage points on state assessments.
- Missouri's education spending continues to lag behind the nation and the border states' average.

We also analyzed college enrollment data for the years leading up to the pandemic, between 2011 and 2019, and found postsecondary enrollment steadily decreased statewide, while many Missouri high school graduates who headed immediately to college did so out-of-state.

Finally, this profile includes a special SLU/YouGov Poll feature on Missouri voters' opinions on education issues, such as school safety, school quality, four day school weeks, and curriculum opt-outs. We were especially interested to see the most voters in the history of this poll rank education as their most important issue.

We learned a lot creating this profile, and we hope it is informative for you, too.

MISSOURI EDUCATION FAST FACTS

2021-22

STUDENTS

- > Number of Public School Students: 863,218
- > Proportional Attendance Rate: 76.2%
- > Percent FRL-Eligible: 41.3%
- > Composite ACT Score: 20.3
- > Percent Who Took the ACT: 64%
- > Percent Who Completed the FAFSA: 47%
- > Four-Year High School Graduation Rate: 89.7%



SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

- > Number of Traditional Public School Districts: 519
- > Number of Public Charter School Districts: 37
- > Average Per Pupil Spending: \$13,139
- > Number of School Buildings: 2,352
- > Student to Teacher Ratio: 16:1
- > Percent of Districts with Four-Day School Weeks: 24%



TEACHERS

- > Number of Public School Teachers: 71,713
- > Average Starting Salary: \$34,052 (rank 50 of 51)*
- > Average Salary: \$51,557 (rank 47 of 51)*
- > Average Years of Experience: 13.1
- > Percent of Teachers with Regular Certificates: 98.3%
- > Percent of Teachers with Advanced Degrees: 62%



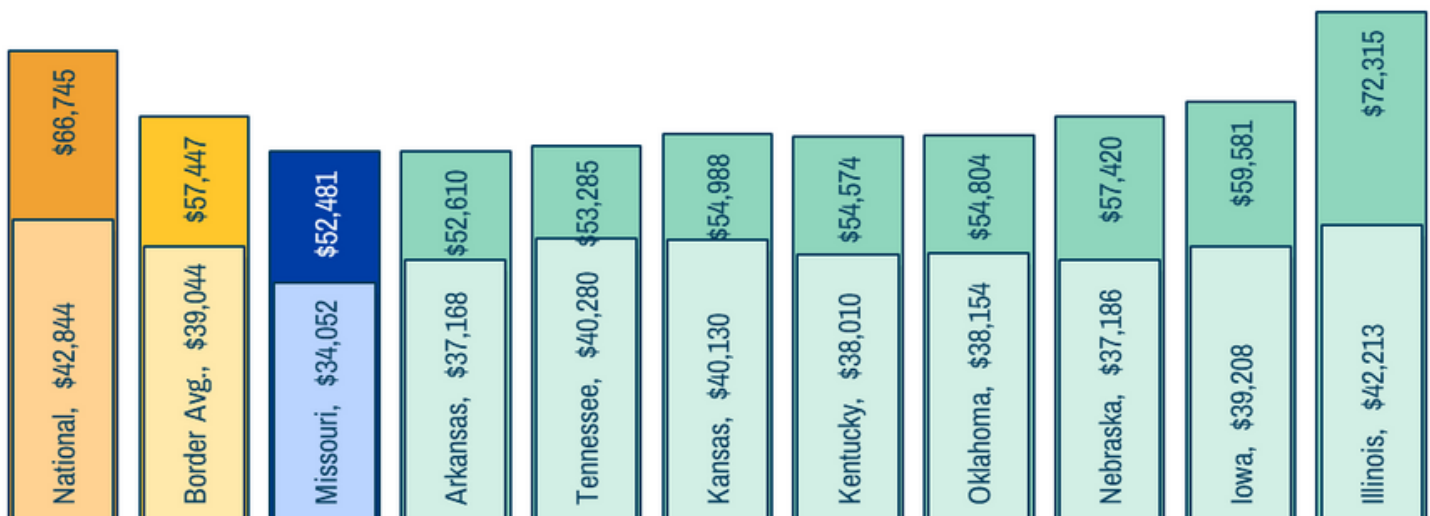
1 TEACHERS

Teacher Salary

Nationally, the average salary for first-year teachers was \$42,844 and the average overall teacher salary was \$66,745, according to data from the National Education Association (NEA). In Missouri, the average starting teacher salary was \$34,052, while overall teachers made \$52,481 on average. Notably, both Missouri's average pay for first-year teachers and average pay for teachers overall is less than its eight border states and the national average. Missouri ranks 50th in the nation for average starting teacher salary and 47th in the nation for average teacher salary.

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Average Starting and Overall Average Teacher Salaries,
Missouri, Nation, and Border States, 2021-22



Missouri's average starting teacher salary is below the minimum living wage (as defined by the Economic Policy Institute). Additionally, Missouri's average starting teacher salary is lower than border states that have a lower minimum living wage such as Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. The teacher pay gap in Missouri was \$0.28, which indicates teachers make \$0.72 to every \$1.00 when compared to other college-educated professionals with similar experience. Among border states, Missouri's teacher pay gap is one of the largest, second only to Oklahoma whose pay gap is \$0.33.

Missouri's average starting teacher salary is below the minimum living wage. Among border states, Missouri's teacher pay gap (\$0.28) is one of the largest.

	Avg Teacher Starting Salary	Avg Teacher Salary	Teacher Pay Gap ^a	Minimum Living Wage ^b
Border States Avg.	\$39,044	\$57,447	\$0.23	\$49,676
Illinois	\$42,213	\$72,315	\$0.23	\$52,809
Kansas	\$40,280	\$53,285	\$0.24	\$46,745
Tennessee	\$40,130	\$54,988	\$0.23	\$52,739
Iowa	\$39,208	\$59,581	\$0.16	\$51,875
Oklahoma	\$38,154	\$54,804	\$0.33	\$47,322
Kentucky	\$38,010	\$54,574	\$0.25	\$49,324
Nebraska	\$37,186	\$57,420	\$0.21	\$52,132
Arkansas	\$37,168	\$52,610	\$0.20	\$44,463
Missouri	\$34,052	\$52,481	\$0.28	\$46,944

Note: The bubble size is based on the national ranking of average starting teacher salary, where smaller bubbles represent a lower ranking.

^a Difference in cents on the dollar between teachers and other college-educated professionals with similar experience. Economic Policy Institute, August 2022

^b Income needed for family of one adult and one child to have a modest but adequate standard of living in the most affordable metro area, 2020 dollars. Economic Policy Institute

Teacher Demographics: Racial Diversity

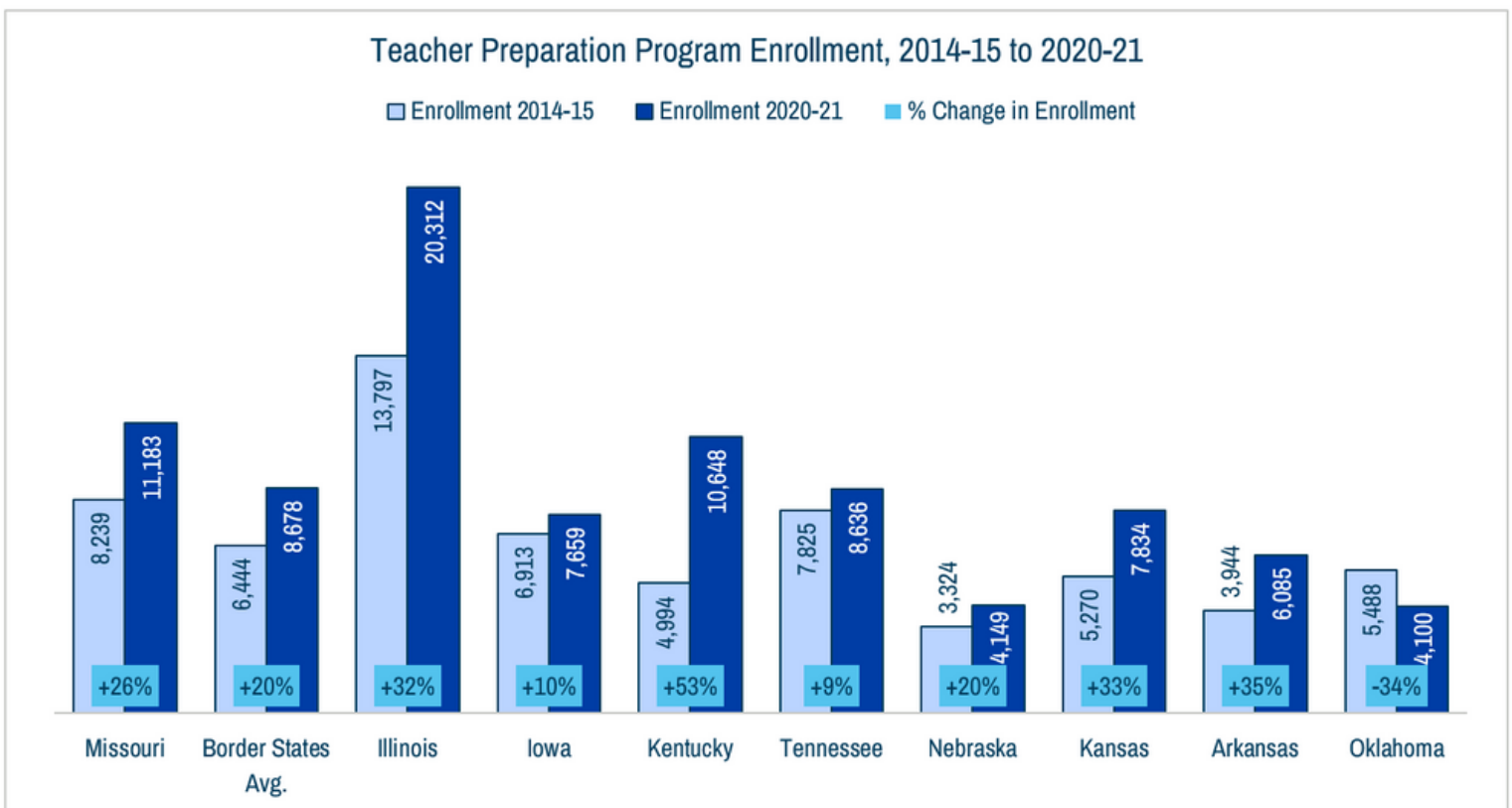
Missouri teacher demographics by race/ethnicity have remained relatively stable between 2017-18 and 2020-21. More than nine of ten teachers (91%) were White, though Missouri saw a slight increase in Black teachers and teachers of other races. On average, Missouri's border states have seen a decrease in the diversity of teachers in the same time period.

Public K-12 School Teachers by Race/Ethnicity, Nation, Mission, and Border States Average

	Nation		Missouri		Border States Avg.	
	2017-18	2020-21	2017-18	2020-21	2017-18	2020-21
Black	7%	6%	4%	5%	5%	3%
Hispanic	9%	9%	2%	2%	3%	3%
White	79%	80%	93%	91%	89%	91%
Other Races	5%	5%	1%	2%	8%	3%

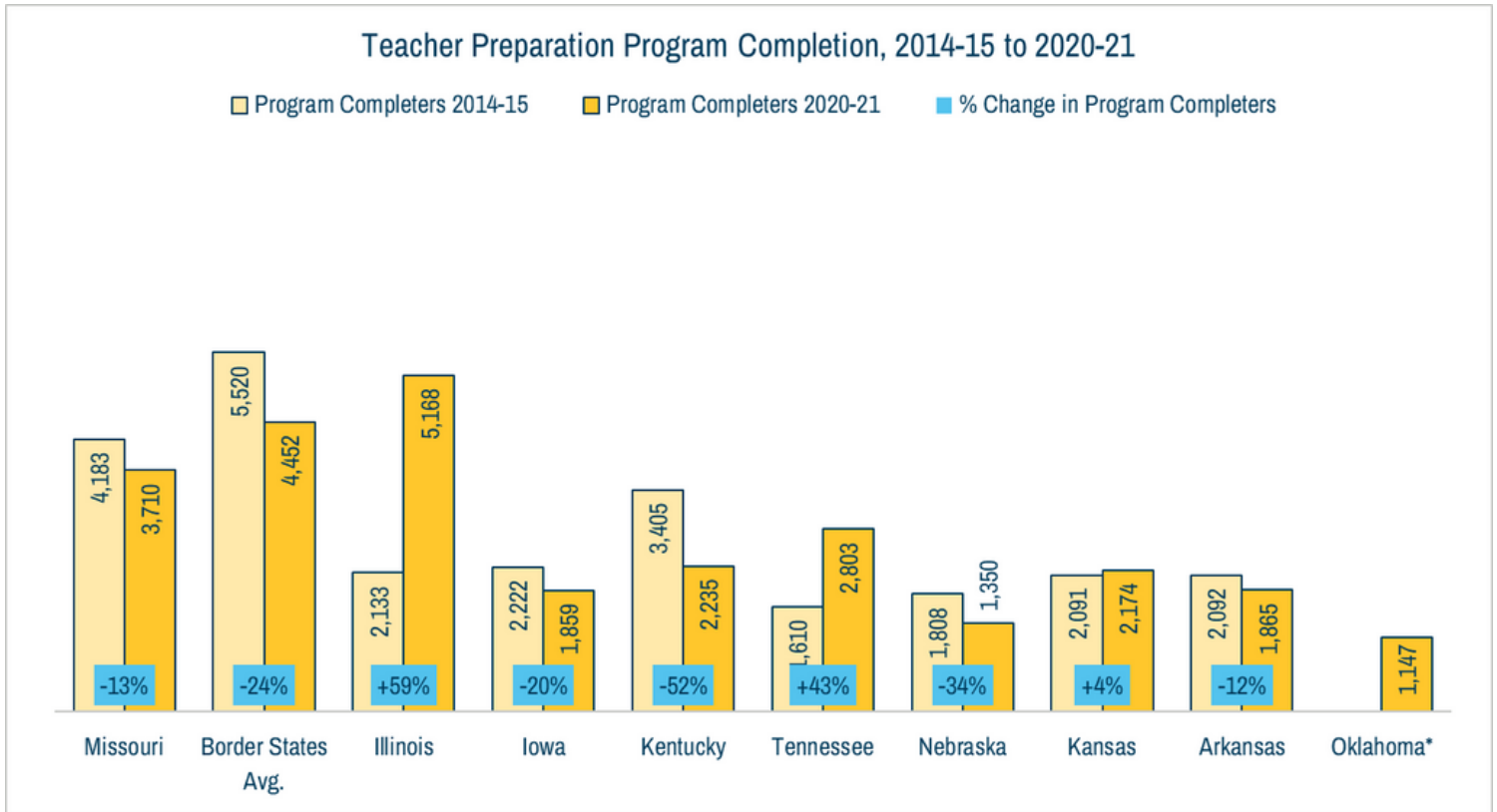
Teacher Preparation Programs: Enrollment & Completion

Enrollment in and completion of teacher preparation programs are important aspects of the teacher pipeline, particularly as Missouri and other states face teacher shortages. In 2020-21, Missouri's enrollment in teacher education preparation programs totaled 11,183, increasing 26% since 2014-15, and outpacing the border state average increase (20%). However, Missouri has not kept pace with the national average enrollment, which increased 30% between 2014-15 and 2020-21.



Enrollment in Missouri teacher education preparation programs increased 26% between 2014-15 and 2020-21, and outpaced the border state average increase (20%).

In the same time period, completion of teacher preparation programs (i.e., earning an education degree) declined by 13% in Missouri and 24% on average in Missouri's border states. This equates to 473 fewer potential teachers completing a preparation program in Missouri in 2020-21. Illinois, Tennessee, and Kansas were the only states to experience an increase in program completers between 2014-15 and 2020-21.



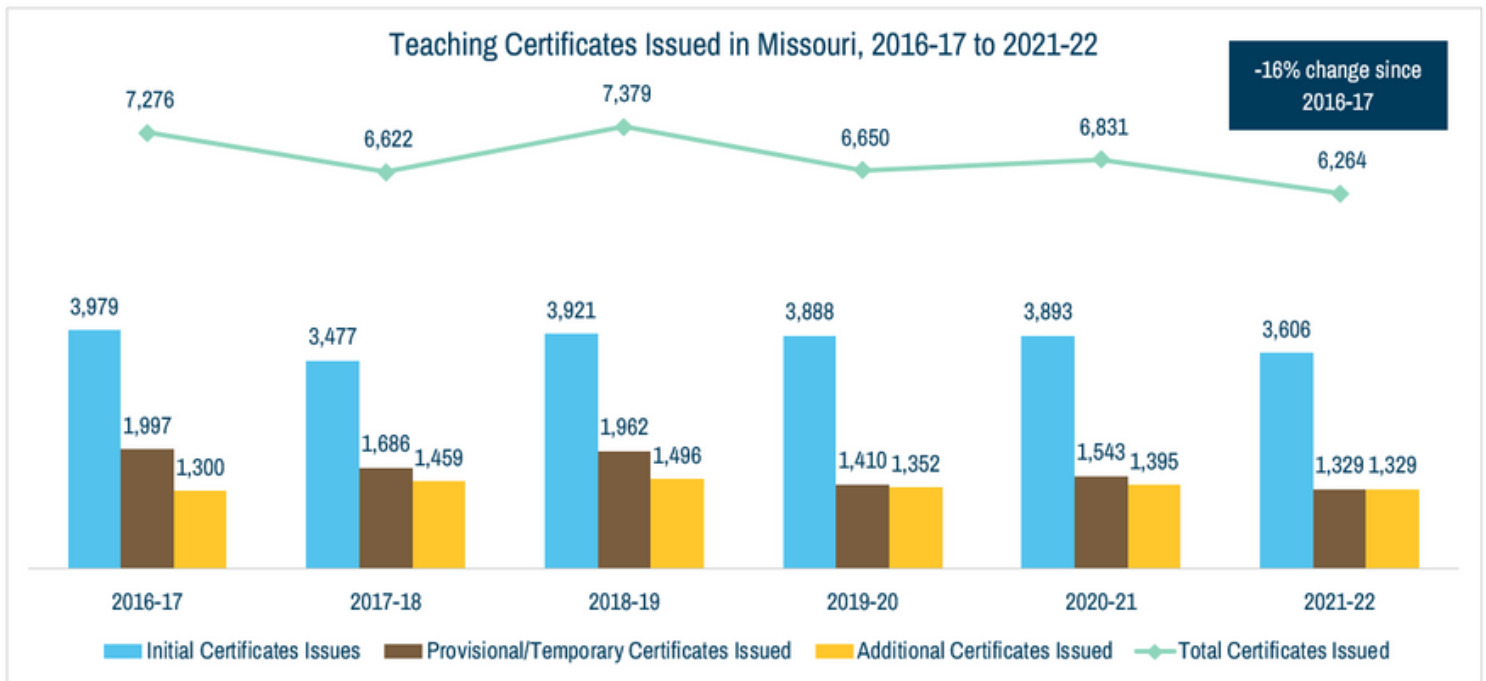
*Data unavailable for 2014-15

Completion of teacher preparation programs declined by 13% in Missouri and 24% on average in border states between 2014-15 and 2020-21.

Certificates Issued & New Hires

The number of teaching certificates issued in Missouri has declined 16% over the last six years, according to [DESE's Missouri Educator Certification data](#). The number of initial certificates and provisional/temporary certificates both declined between 2016-17 and 2021-22, while the number of additional certificates issued was relatively the same.

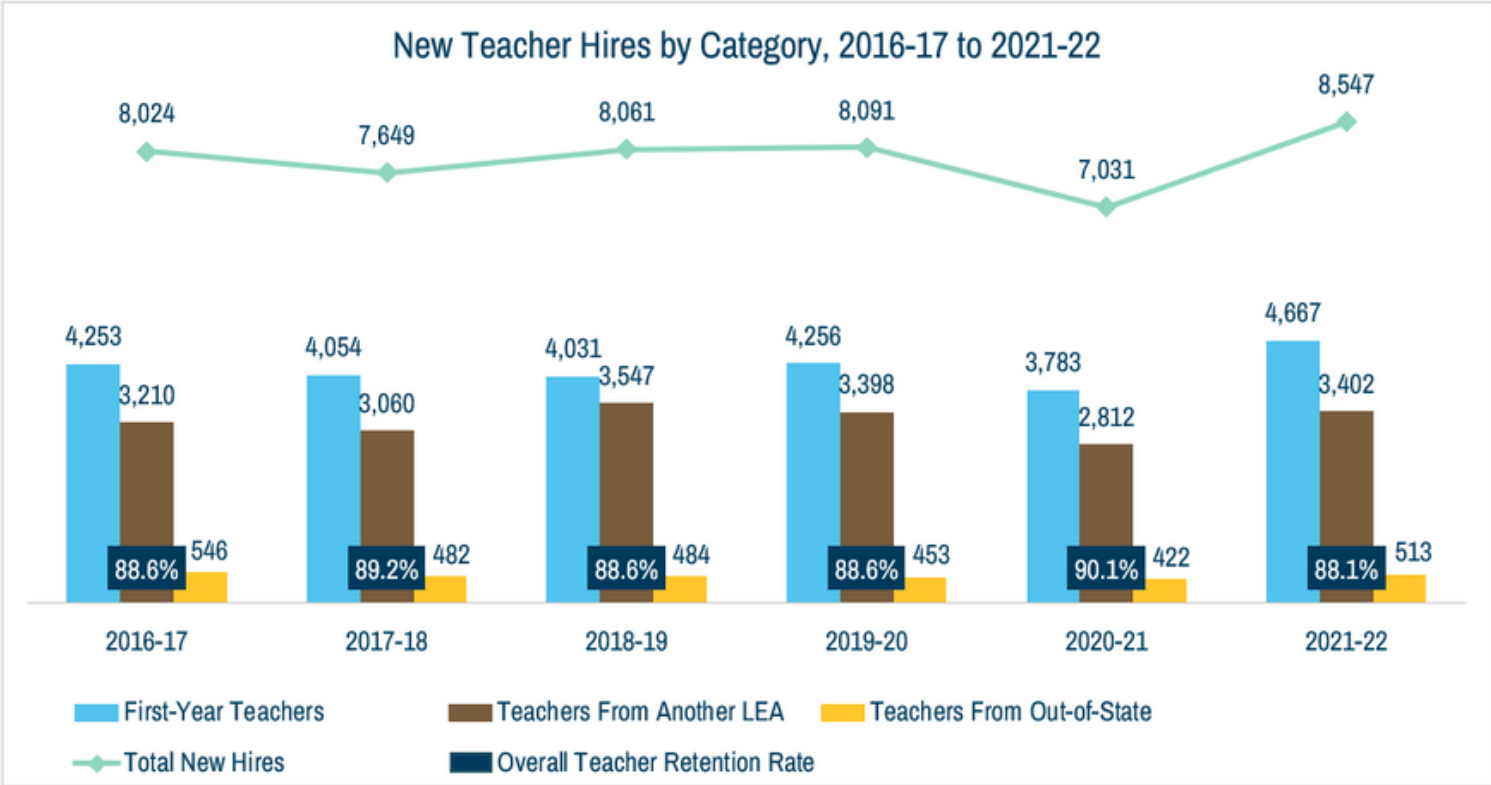
The total number of teaching certificates issued in Missouri has declined 16% over the last six years.



Local education agencies (LEAs) hired more teachers in 2022 than in the five previous years. This may be a result of teachers leaving the profession after difficult experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, overall teacher retention declined by two percentage points between 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Similar to previous years, the majority of newly hired teachers in 2022 were first-year teachers, while a high proportion came from other districts; few Missouri teachers were hired from out-of-state. As noted in our [previous brief](#), recruiting teachers from out-of-state and easing some of the burdens for those looking to switch career paths are two potentially untapped pipelines. Missouri having some of the lowest starting and average teacher salaries may serve as a "block" in the pipeline.

Local education agencies (LEAs) hired more teachers in 2022 than in the five previous years. Overall teacher retention declined by two percentage points between 2020-21 and 2021-22.

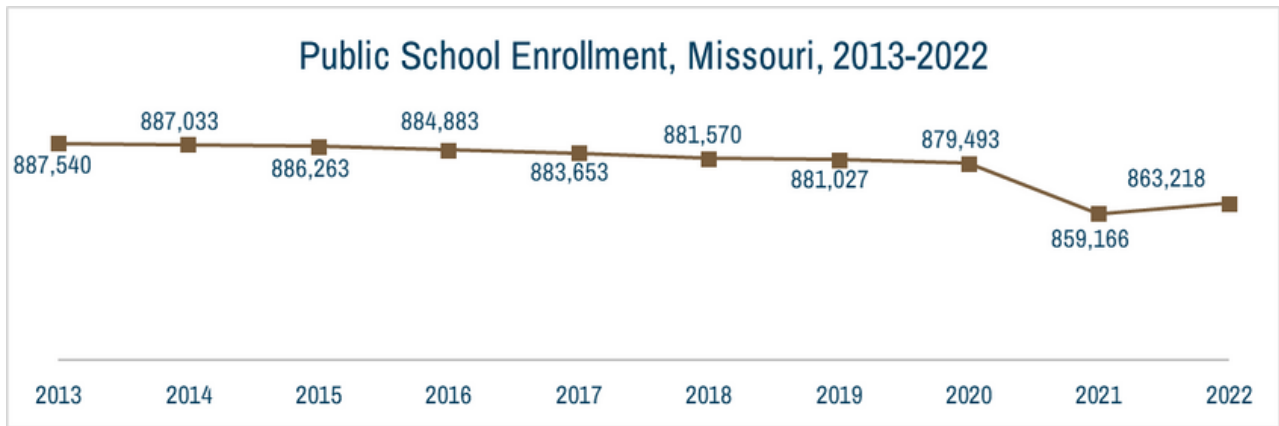


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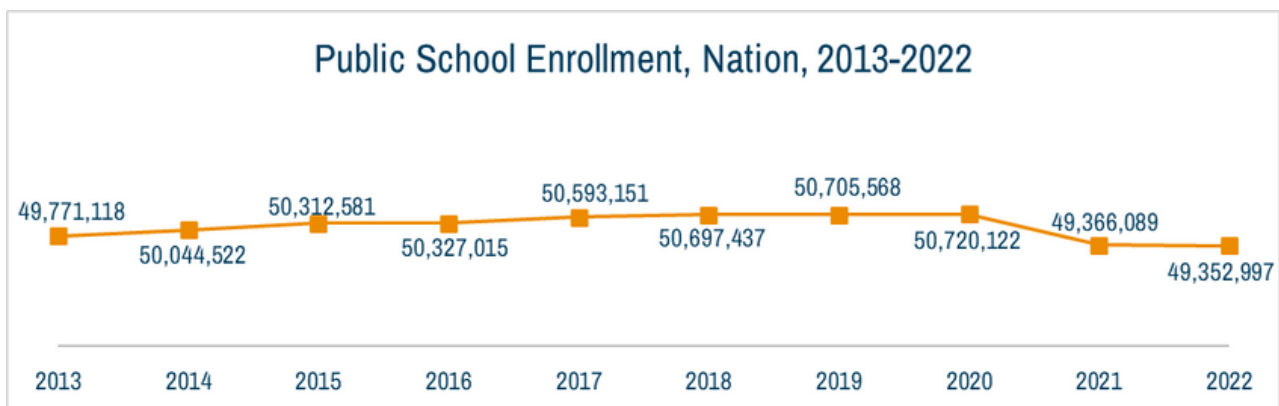
ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHICS

Enrollment

Over the past decade, Missouri's public school enrollment has declined by about 24,000 students in Missouri. The steepest enrollment drop occurred in the 2020-21 school year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as some students may have enrolled in private schools, switched to homeschooling, or may have left the state altogether. While the 2021-22 school year saw a slight rebound, enrollment remains lower than pre-pandemic levels. Overall, Missouri's public school enrollment declined by 2.8% between 2013 and 2022. This decrease was larger than national trends where public school enrollment fell 0.8% between 2013 and 2022.



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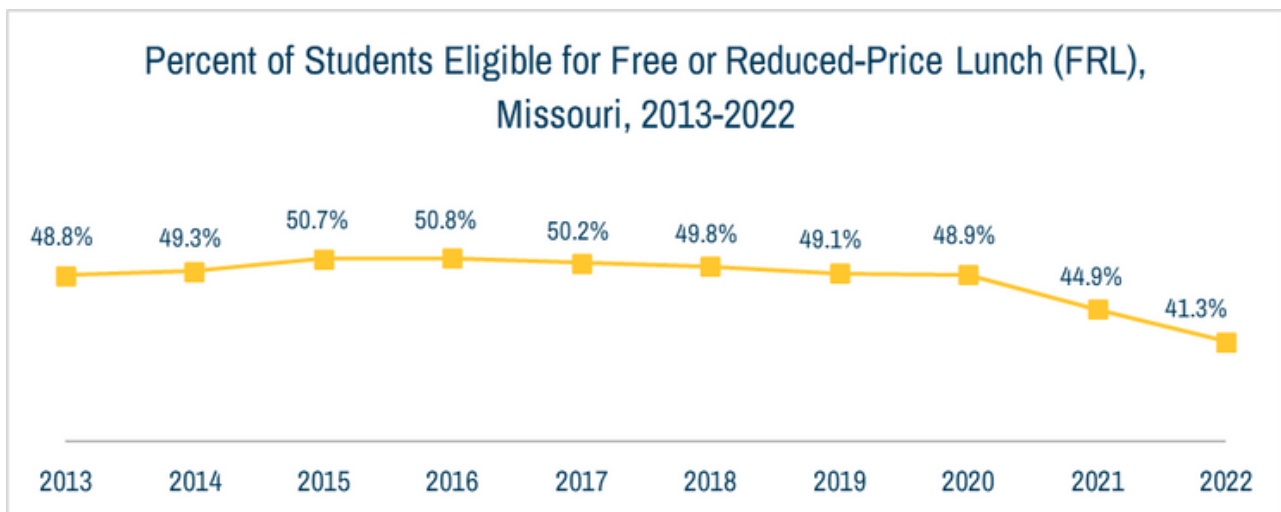


Demographics

According to national data from the 2020-21 school year, the majority of Missouri's students were White (70%) while 15% and 7% of students were Black and Hispanic, respectively. Compared to the border states average and the nation, Missouri had a higher percentage of White students, a similar percentage of Black students, and a smaller percentage of Hispanic students. Missouri also has a smaller proportion of Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) eligible students and English Language Learners (ELL).

	White	Black	Hispanic	All Other Races	Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) Eligible*	English Language Learners (ELL)
Missouri	70%	15%	7%	8%	50%	4%
National Average	52%	10%	45%	15%	28%	12%
Border States Average	54%	8%	57%	14%	19%	10%

The percent of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch (FRL)¹ declined by 8.5 percentage points between 2018–2022. Nearly one of two students (49.8%) were FRL-eligible in 2018, while slightly more than two of five students (41.3%) were eligible in 2022. However, this may not indicate the level of need for free or reduced-price lunches has lessened so dramatically. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government enacted a policy that ensured access to school meals for all public school students. Families who would typically be required to submit applications to determine and/or verify eligibility may not have done so during this period. U.S. Census data indicated the percent of Missouri families below the poverty level was 9.8% in 2018 while in 2021 it was 8.5%. In addition, the percentage of households with children under 18 years who received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits between 2018–2021 remained nearly unchanged, 30% and 29.2% respectively.



The percent of students eligible for FRL in 2022 was 41.3%, a decline of 8.5 percentage points since 2018.

¹ Children are eligible to receive free meals if they live in households with incomes below 130% of the poverty level or their household receives SNAP or TANF benefits. Children who live in households with incomes between 130-185% of the poverty line qualify for reduced-price meals.

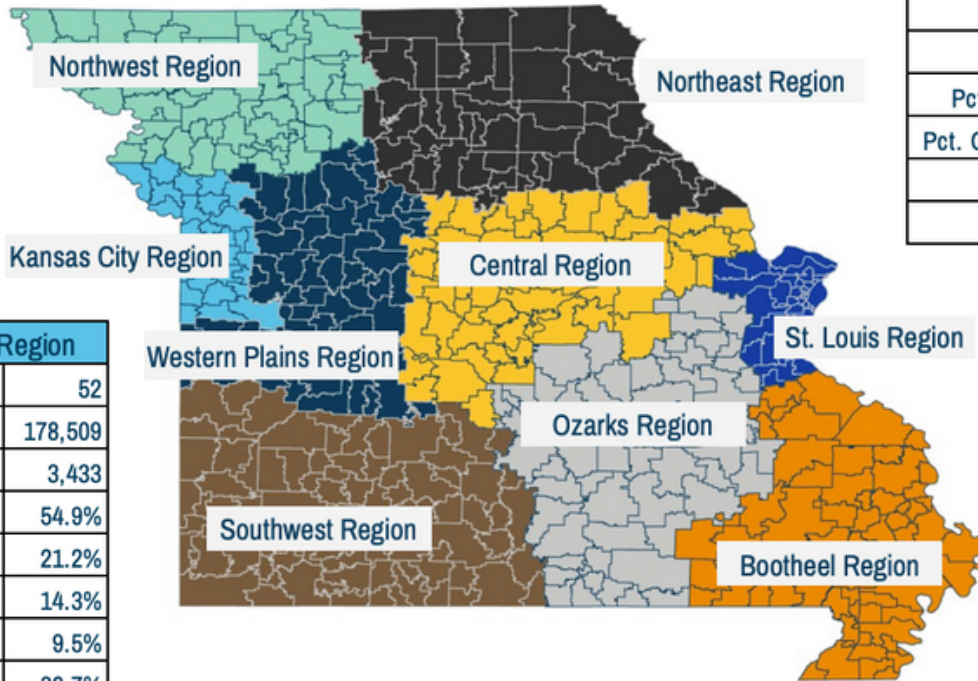
Enrollment & Demographics by Missouri Region

Northwest Region	
No. Districts	60
Enrollment	32,122
Avg. Enrollment	535
Pct. White	85.1%
Pct. Black	3.0%
Pct. Hispanic	4.6%
Pct. Other Race	6.5%
Pct. FRL	43.9%
Pct. ELL	2.7%

Central Region	
No. Districts	57
Enrollment	79,866
Avg. Enrollment	1,401
Pct. White	78.6%
Pct. Black	8.2%
Pct. Hispanic	5.0%
Pct. Other Race	7.8%
Pct. FRL	36.6%
Pct. ELL	2.5%

Northeast Region	
No. Districts	48
Enrollment	26,545
Avg. Enrollment	553
Pct. White	88.4%
Pct. Black	3.2%
Pct. Hispanic	3.3%
Pct. Other Race	4.5%
Pct. FRL	39.1%
Pct. ELL	1.4%

St. Louis Region	
No. Districts	57
Enrollment	251,891
Avg. Enrollment	4,419
Pct. White	56.3%
Pct. Black	28.9%
Pct. Hispanic	5.6%
Pct. Other Race	9.1%
Pct. FRL	37.3%
Pct. ELL	4.5%



Kansas City Region	
No. Districts	52
Enrollment	178,509
Avg. Enrollment	3,433
Pct. White	54.9%
Pct. Black	21.2%
Pct. Hispanic	14.3%
Pct. Other Race	9.5%
Pct. FRL	38.7%
Pct. ELL	6.3%

Western Plains Region	
No. Districts	61
Enrollment	36,903
Avg. Enrollment	605
Pct. White	83.5%
Pct. Black	2.3%
Pct. Hispanic	7.4%
Pct. Other Race	6.2%
Pct. FRL	41.7%
Pct. ELL	2.5%

Southwest Region	
No. Districts	57
Enrollment	251,891
Avg. Enrollment	4,419
Pct. White	56.3%
Pct. Black	28.9%
Pct. Hispanic	5.6%
Pct. Other Race	9.1%
Pct. FRL	37.3%
Pct. ELL	4.5%

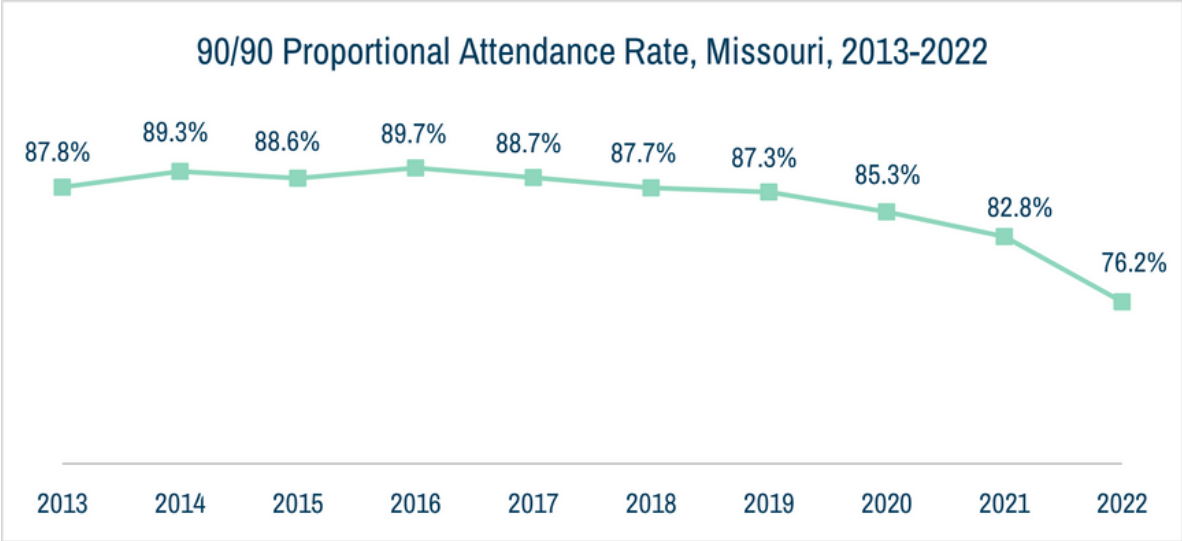
Ozarks Region	
No. Districts	63
Enrollment	54,038
Avg. Enrollment	858
Pct. White	88.3%
Pct. Black	2.3%
Pct. Hispanic	3.8%
Pct. Other Race	5.1%
Pct. FRL	45.0%
Pct. ELL	1.0%

Bootheel Region	
No. Districts	65
Enrollment	61,813
Avg. Enrollment	951
Pct. White	81.4%
Pct. Black	10.3%
Pct. Hispanic	3.6%
Pct. Other Race	4.4%
Pct. FRL	63.5%
Pct. ELL	0.9%

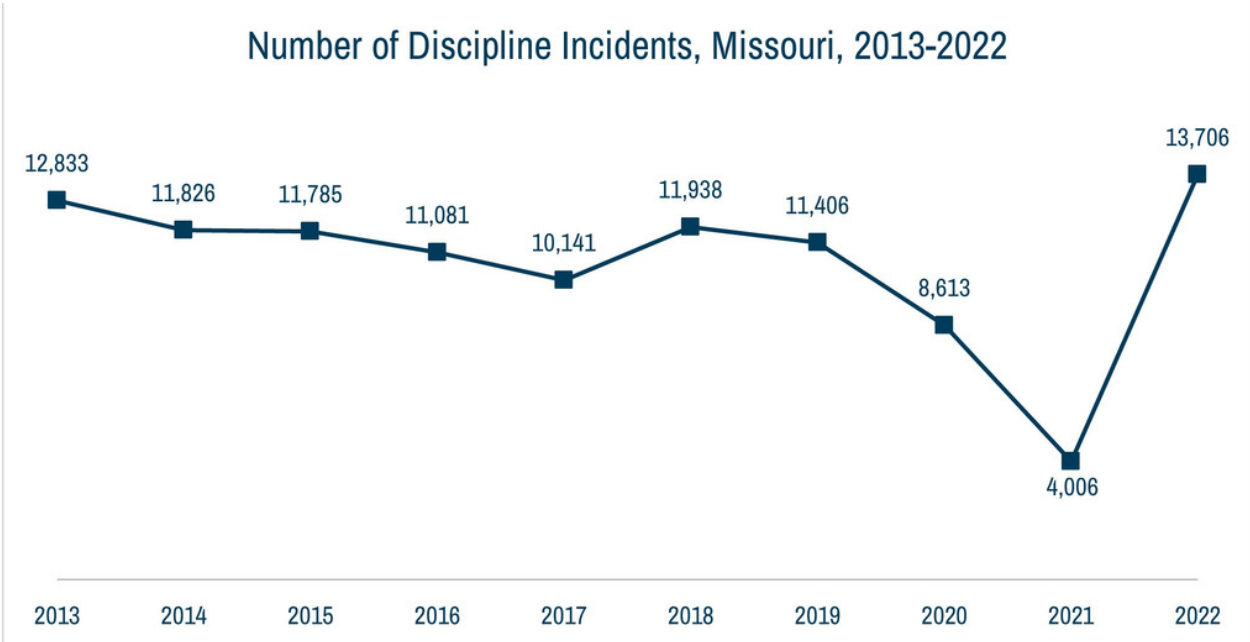
Attendance & Discipline

Missouri's goal for student attendance—known as the 90/90 rule—is that 90% of the student population attend school at least 90% of the time. The attendance rate saw some minor fluctuations prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but has seen significant declines in recent years. The 90/90 attendance rate was 87% in 2018 and dropped to 76% in 2022. Over the same period, school discipline rates increased after a dip during the pandemic. In 2022, there were 13,706 incidents compared to 4,006 in 2021.

The attendance rate dropped from 87% in 2018 to 76% in 2022.



Discipline incidents increased by 20.2% between 2019 and 2022.



The number of discipline incidents increased 20.2% between 2019 and 2022, after a two-year dip during an era of increased virtual learning. The 2021-22 school year saw more reported discipline incidents than any year since 2012. Records show 320 districts reported zero discipline incidents.

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ACADEMIC GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT

Academic growth and achievement are both useful measures of student achievement but have important differences. Standardized assessments are indicators of students' point-in-time academic achievement, while academic growth is a measure of students' academic progress over time. In this section, we present information and resources on students' growth as measured by PRiME Growth Scores and capture achievement via the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and ACT.

PRiME Growth Scores

Student growth scores are a better indicator of student progress towards learning standards over time as compared to point-in-time assessments. We believe the success of schools and educators working hard to drive student learning forward is also better indicated through student growth scores.

Student growth scores are calculated at the school level using student achievement data and represent the academic performance of students at each school relative to their predicted performance. Predicted future scores are based on the average performance of peers. When students outperform their predicted scores, it means they grew more than other academically comparable students. If students at a school collectively perform exactly as expected, the school's PRiME Growth Score is 85. If students at a school collectively perform better or worse than expected, the school's growth score goes up or down accordingly. PRiME Growth Scores in the high 90s are very good and Growth Scores in the low 70s are quite low.

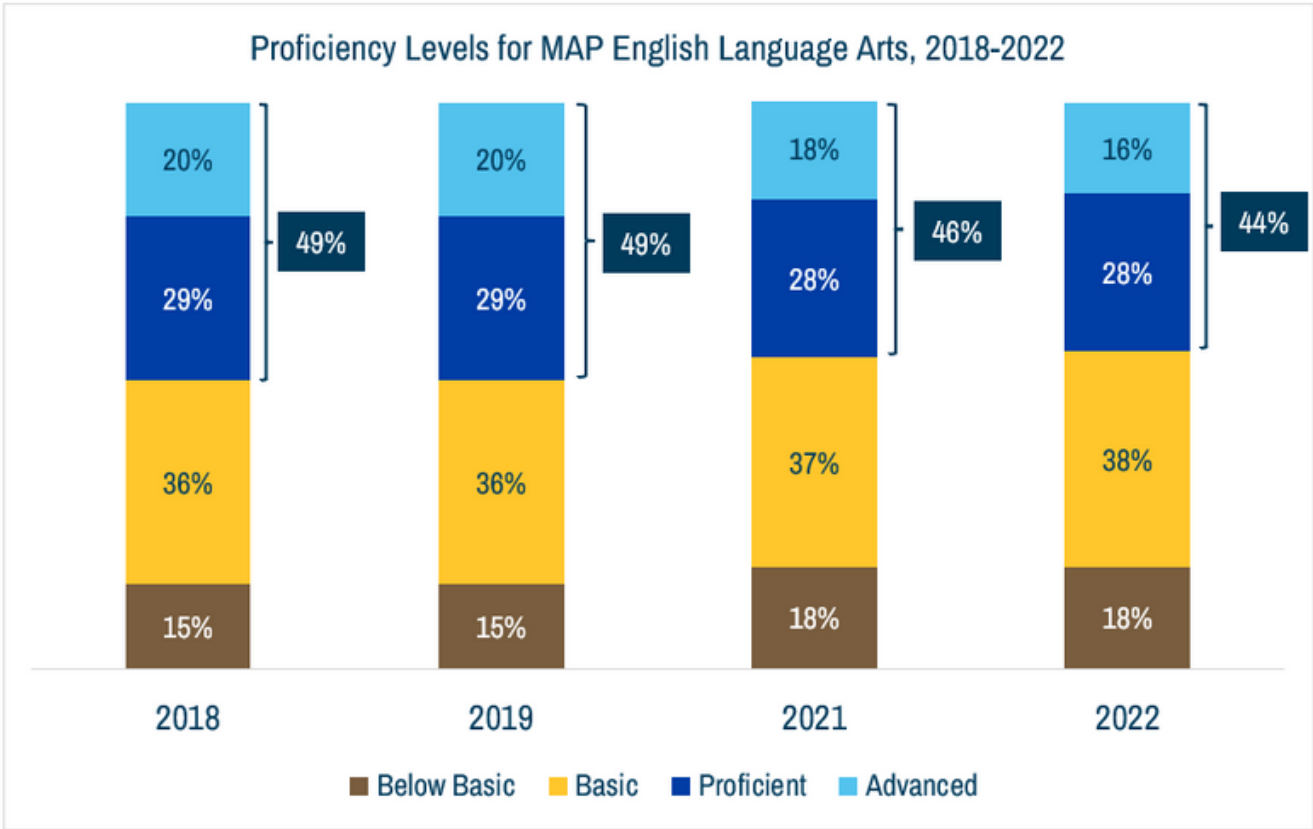
Importantly, schools with lower proficiency levels may exhibit high growth. Thus, the PRiME Growth Score can reveal excellent academic growth across a wide spectrum of schools. Growth Scores are available for all elementary, eleMiddle, and middle schools in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, schoolwide and for the Subgroup. The Subgroup includes students receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL), Black and Hispanic students, English Language Learners (ELL), and students with disabilities. Subgroup growth is one indication of how schools are working to close persistent achievement and opportunity gaps.

Growth Scores vary widely by school. Thus, presenting a state-level overview is not helpful. We encourage all stakeholders to review our [Student Growth Reports](#), which highlight the top growth schools in different contexts, and utilize our [Growth Data Tool](#), which provides information for every school in Missouri that has a Growth Score.

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)

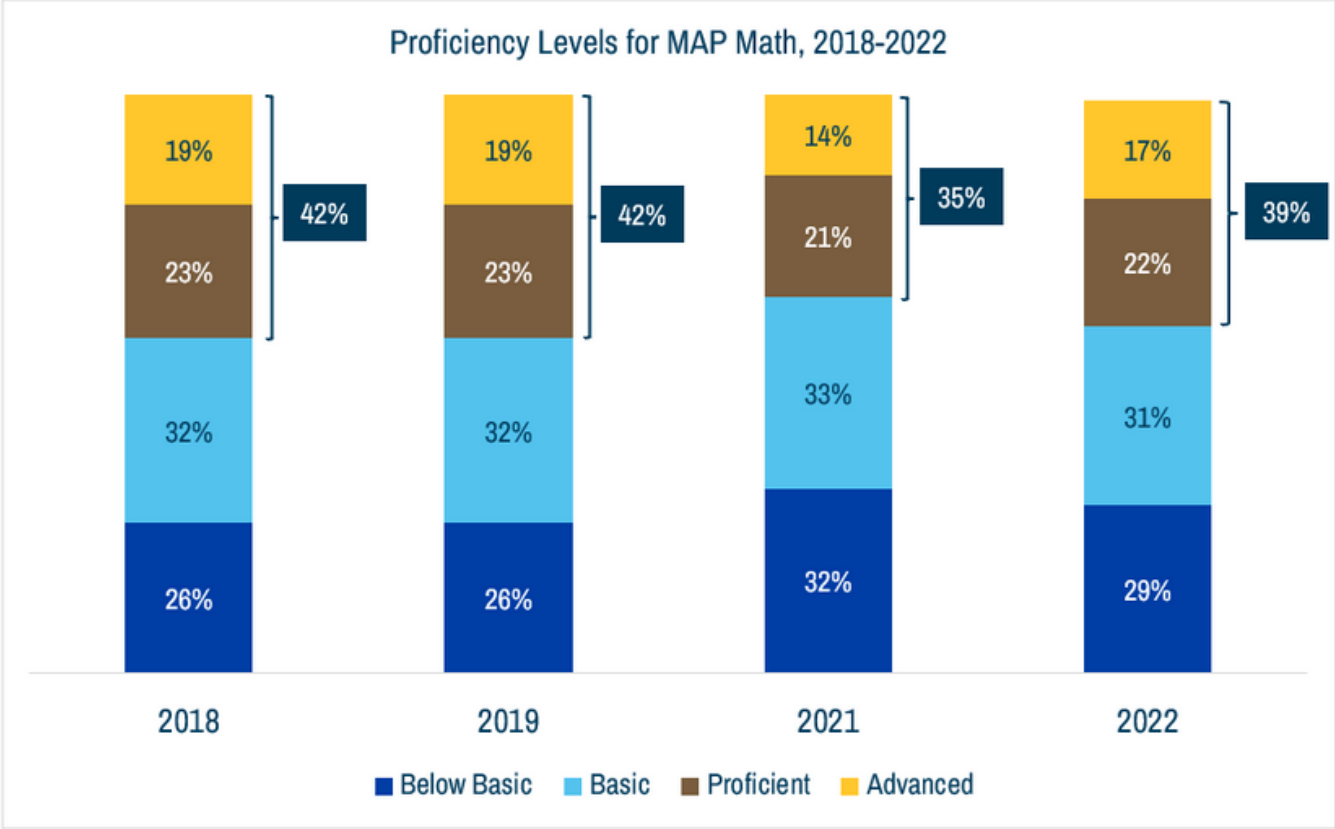
Student performance on MAP tests is reported in terms of four performance levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Students performing at the Proficient level or above are considered to have mastered the skills and processes identified in the Missouri Learning Standards. The percent of students achieving MAP Proficient and Advanced in English Language Arts (ELA) decreased by two percentage points between 2021 and 2022. This decline in proficiency contributes to a recent downward trend. The percent of students achieving Proficient and Advanced has decreased by roughly five percentage points since 2019. Notably, MAP tests were not administered in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic likely impacted students' performance in 2021 and 2022.

The percent of students achieving MAP Proficient and Advanced in ELA decreased by two percentage points between 2021 and 2022.



In math, the percent of students achieving Proficient and Advanced increased by nearly four percentage points from 2021 to 2022. Between 2018 and 2021, the percent of students achieving Proficient and Advanced declined by roughly seven percentage points. Thus, the 2022 MAP results indicate a concept called “rebounding” occurred in math. However, the percent of students achieving Proficient and Advanced in 2022 is still slightly lower than in 2018.

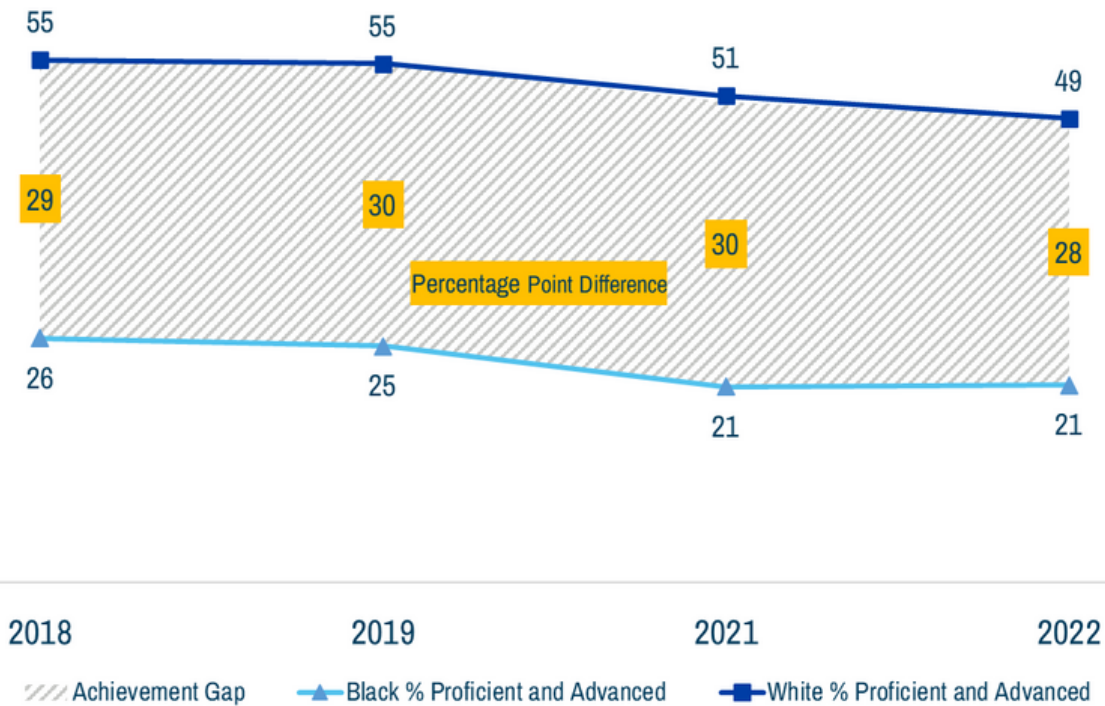
The percent of students achieving Proficient and Advanced in math increased by nearly four percentage points from 2021 to 2022.



The achievement gap between Black and White students achieving Proficient and Advanced in ELA narrowed slightly (roughly two percentage points) between 2021 and 2022 due to more White students achieving lower proficiency levels. In 2021, 21% of Black students achieved Proficient and Advanced in ELA, while 51% of White students achieved the same proficiency, a difference of 30 percentage points. In 2022, the percentage of Black students achieving Proficient and Advanced was relatively the same, while White students experienced a roughly two percentage point decline. The achievement gap in 2022 in ELA was 28 percentage points.

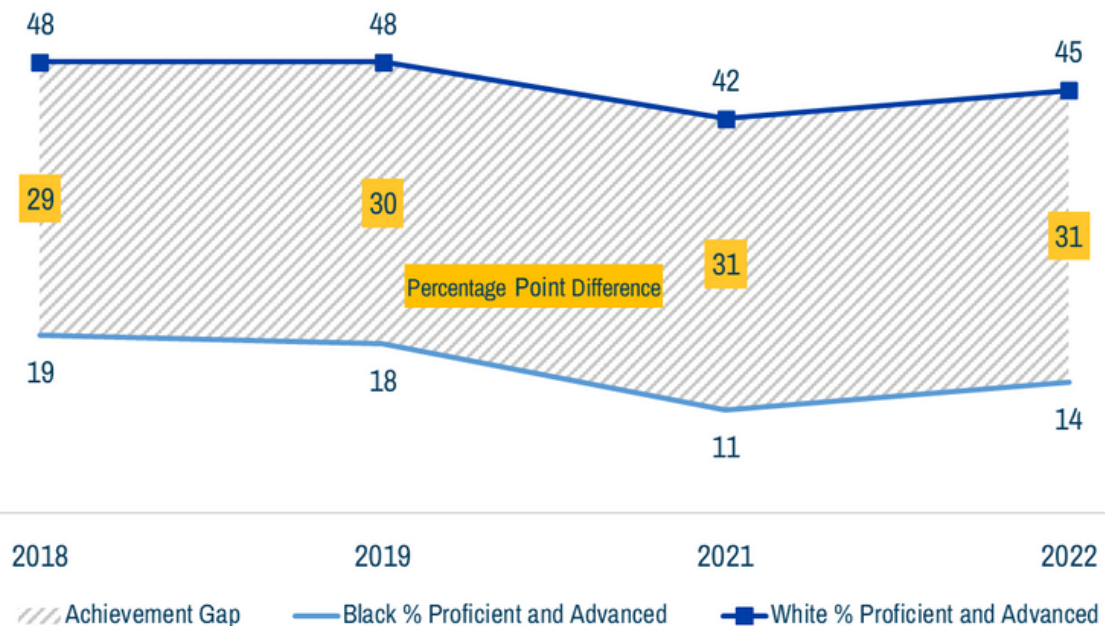
The achievement gap between Black and White students was 28 percentage points in ELA in 2022, a decrease from 2021 due to more White students achieving lower proficiency levels. The achievement gap between Black and White students in math remained the same (31 percentage points) between 2021 and 2022. Overall, the achievement gap between Black and White students remains wide.

MAP English Language Arts Percent Proficient and Advanced,
White and Black Students, 2018-2022



The achievement gap between Black and White students in math remained the same (31 percentage points) between 2021 and 2022. In 2021, 11% of Black students achieved Proficient and Advanced in math, while 42% of White students achieved the same proficiency, a difference of 31 percentage points. In 2022, the percentage of Black students achieving Proficient and Advanced increased to 14%, while 45% of White students achieved Proficient and Advanced. Overall, these achievement gaps in ELA and math remains wide.

MAP Math Percent Proficient and Advanced,
White and Black Students, 2018-2022

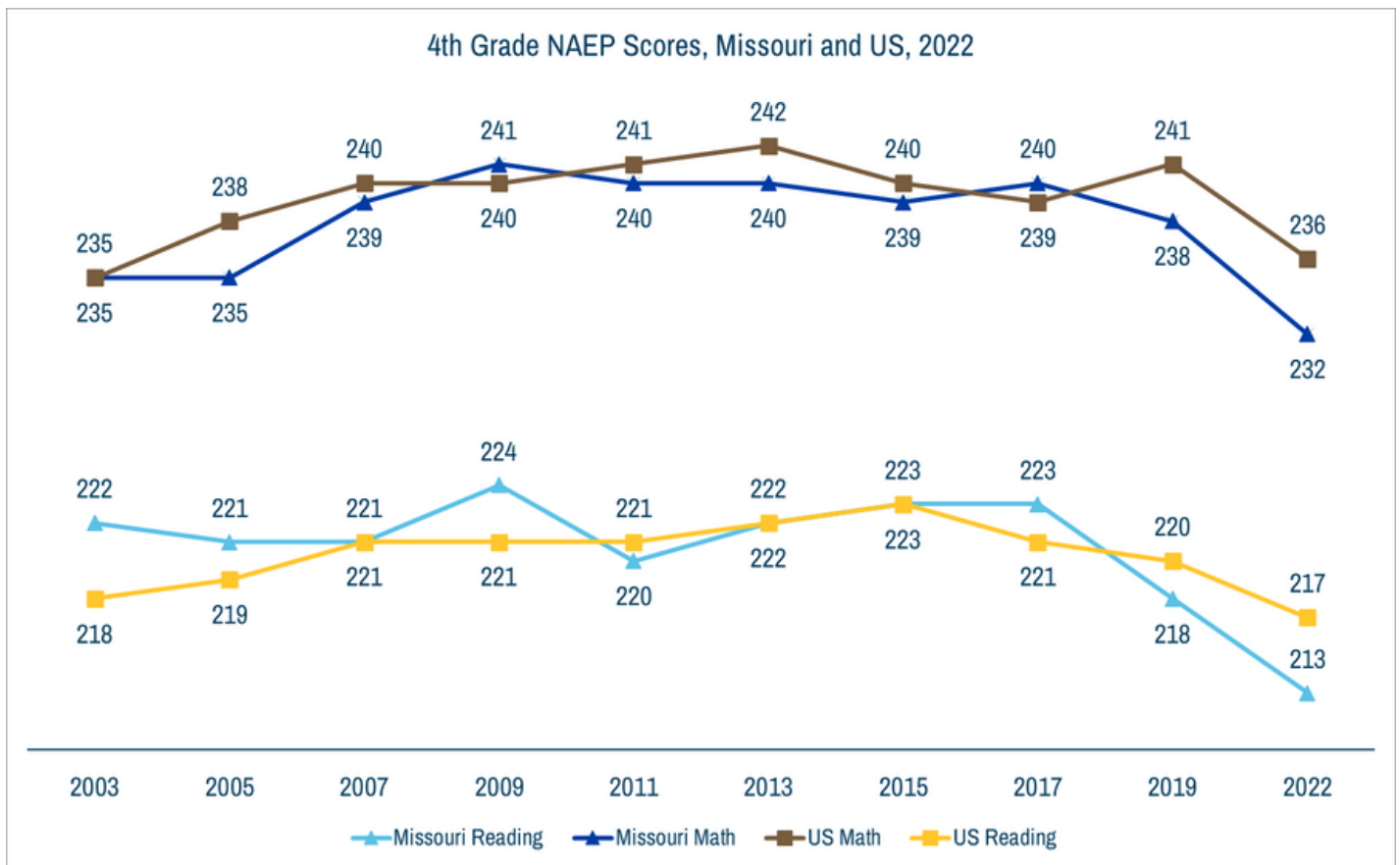


National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

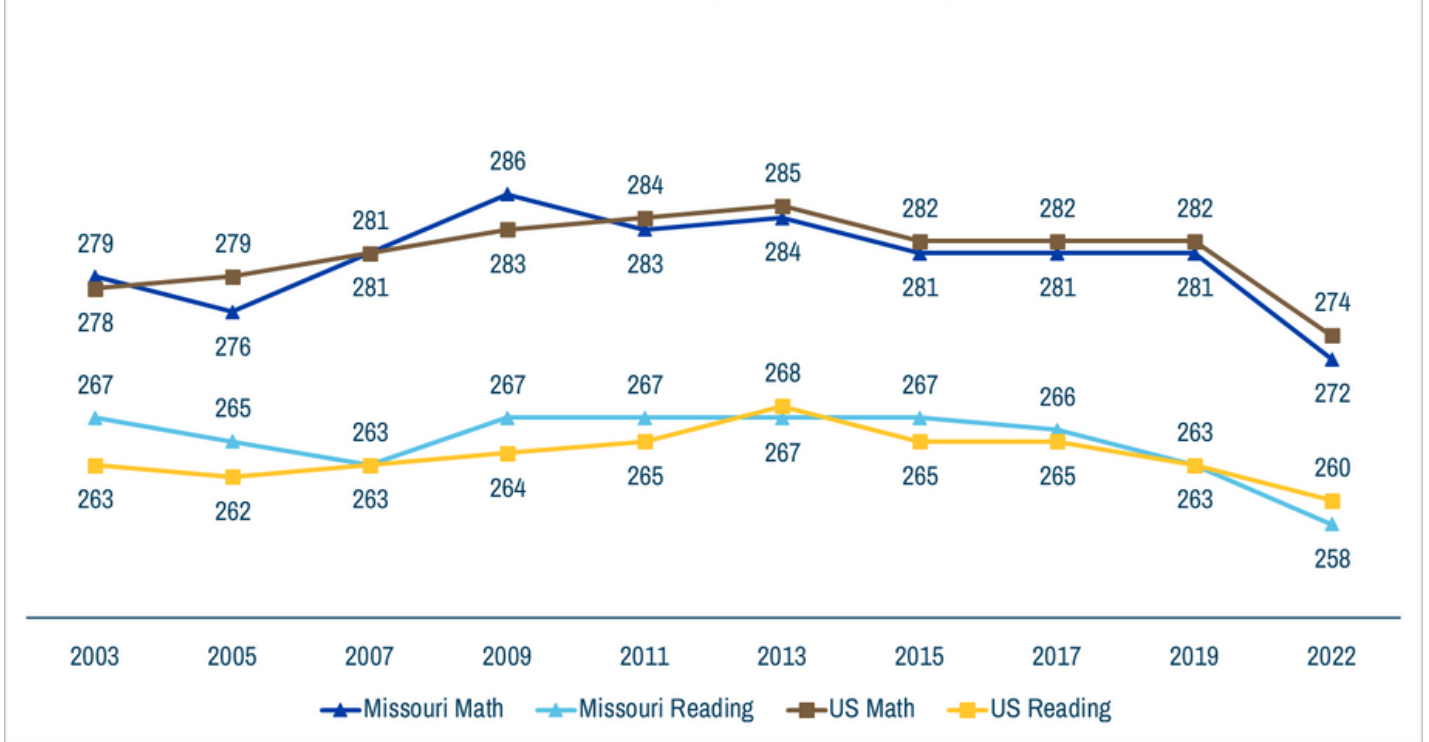
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the “Nation’s Report Card,” is the largest nationally representative and continuous assessment of public and private school students. NAEP provides a common measure of student achievement in 4th and 8th grade, across the nation and in each state, in subjects including mathematics and reading, among others.

Missouri's student performance on NAEP 4th and 8th grade math and reading assessments saw unprecedented declines from 2019 to 2022; the 2022 scores were the lowest in decades. Between 2019 and 2022, Missouri's scores for 4th and 8th grade students in both reading and math fell between 5 and 9 points. Missouri's 4th grade scores in reading and math declined more rapidly than the national average while 8th grade score declines mirrored national trends.

Between 2019 and 2022, Missouri's scores for 4th and 8th grade students in both reading and math fell between 5 and 9 points.

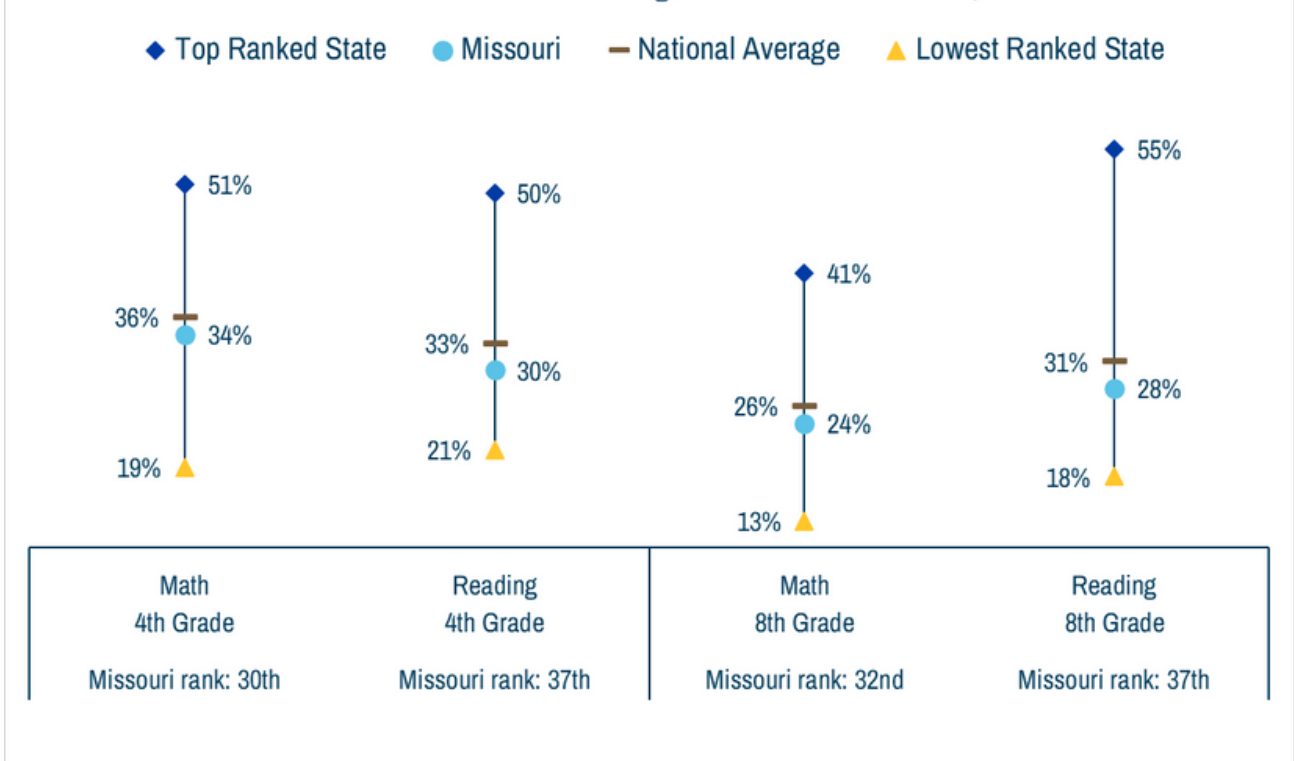


8th Grade NAEP Scores, Missouri and US, 2022



Missouri has fewer NAEP Proficient and Advanced students than in prior years and lags behind the majority of other states and the national average. Approximately two of five Missouri students are Below Basic in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Slightly less than one in four (24%) of Missouri 8th graders achieved NAEP Proficient and Advanced on the math assessment. Importantly, NAEP Proficient does not represent grade level proficiency as it often does on other state or district assessments. Rather, students performing at or above the NAEP Proficient level demonstrate solid academic performance and competency of the subject matter.

Percent of NAEP Students Scoring Proficient and Advanced, 2022



ACT

Composite ACT scores have been consistent in Missouri for the past four years, fluctuating between 20.3 and 20.8 from 2019 to 2022. These scores are roughly on par with, or superior to, the national average composite scores for the same time period. Participation levels for the ACT have steadily declined in Missouri and the nation, particularly after 2020 when many institutions of higher education moved to a test-optional admissions policy. In 2022, two-thirds of Missouri students took the ACT while slightly more than one-third (36%) of students nationally took the ACT. For more information on changes to higher education admissions during the COVID-19 pandemic, we encourage you to read our brief, [Higher Education Admissions and the COVID-19 Pandemic: The National Landscape](#).

		2019	2020	2021	2022
Missouri	Composite ACT Score	20.6	20.7	20.8	20.3
	% of students tested	82%	78%	63%	66%
Nation	Composite ACT Score	20.7	20.6	20.3	19.8
	% of students tested	48%	49%	35%	36%

ACT participation levels have steadily declined in Missouri and the nation, particularly after 2020 when many institutions of higher education moved to a test-optional admissions policy.

4

POSTSECONDARY ACCESS & SUCCESS

In our Postsecondary Access & Success Reports, we described patterns in college-intending behaviors and postsecondary access for Missouri public high school students and described postsecondary success for students who graduated from a Missouri public high school and enrolled as a first-time, full-time student (FTFT) at one of Missouri's public institutions of higher education (IHE). Below we feature notable state-level highlights from these reports.

FAFSA Completion

A key obstacle to college access is financial affordability, especially for low-income high school graduates. Financial aid eligibility, including the Pell Grant, requires completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but FAFSA completion rates remain low. Missouri's reported FAFSA rates lagged far behind the national average for the classes of 2015–2018. Missouri's immediate college enrollment has stayed on par with national trends, as just over 6 in 10 recent high school graduates have opted to enroll in postsecondary education in the subsequent fall. However, fewer than half of Missouri graduates enrolling in postsecondary education completed a FAFSA. Conversely, roughly 60% of students nationwide completed the FAFSA. As of June 16, 2023, Federal Student Aid reported a similar FAFSA completion rate (47.7%) for the Missouri high school class of 2023, while 52.3% of the nation had completed the FAFSA. Missouri currently ranks 32 out of 51 for 2023-24 FAFSA completion by high school seniors.

FAFSA Completion and Immediate College Enrollment Trends in Missouri and Nationally, 2015-2018

Class of...	FAFSA Completion Rate		Immediate College Enrollment Rate	
	Missouri ^a	National ^b	Missouri ^c	National ^d
2015	46%	57%	65%	65%
2016	45%	56%	65%	64%
2017	49%	61%	65%	65%
2018	47%	61%	64%	65%
2019	*	*	62%	64%

^a Missouri's FAFSA completion data is provided by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's FAFSA Completion Project database. Data for the class of 2019 is suppressed. Retrieved from <https://dhewd.mo.gov/fafsa-completion/>

^b National FAFSA completion data include all 18 year olds who reported filing a FAFSA by June 30 of their graduating year and is unavailable at the state level from Federal Student Aid (2022) and reported by NCAN (2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncan.org/page/NationalFAFSACompletionRatesforHighSchoolSeniorsandGraduates>

^c Immediate College enrollment rates for Missouri are reported in the 180-day Follow-up Report for the graduating class of interest

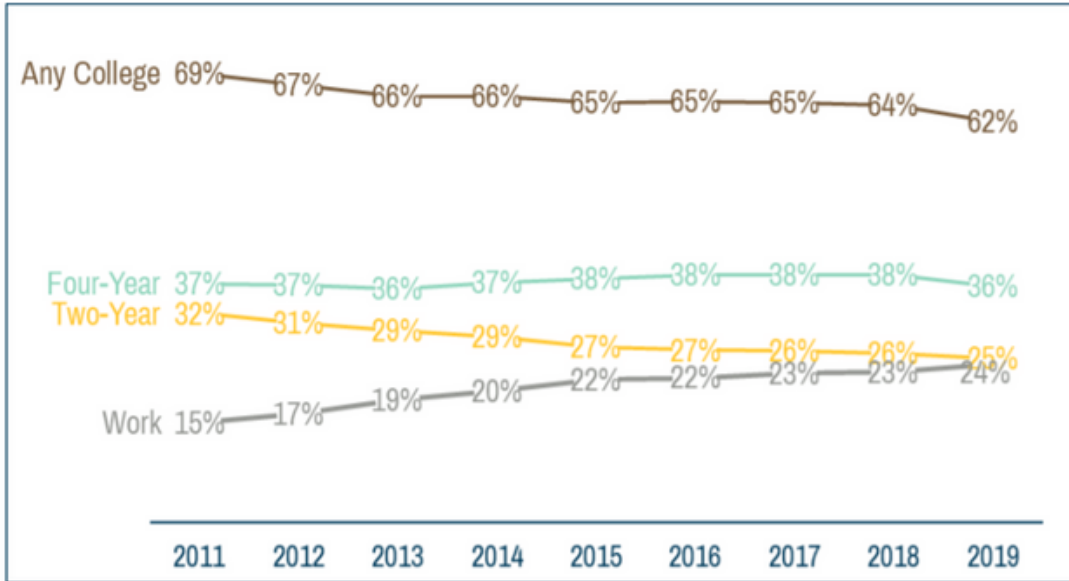
^d National immediate college enrollment rates are reported by the National Student Clearinghouse Benchmarks Reports (2022)

Missouri's FAFSA completion rate lagged far behind the national average. Fewer than half of Missouri graduates enrolling in postsecondary education completed the FAFSA.

Immediate College Enrollment

Statewide, immediate college enrollment declined steadily from 2011–2019 (from 69% to 62%), with the largest declines appearing in two-year college enrollment. Simultaneously, the workforce entry rate increased from 15% to 24%. For the class of 2019—the most recent class to have successfully completed high school prior to COVID-19-induced disruptions—only 88% of graduates enrolled in college or entered the workforce. We also note a considerable share of Missouri graduates who immediately enroll in college leave the state each year; only about 55% of the state’s nearly 38,000 college enrollees from the class of 2019 enrolled in Missouri.

Trends in Postsecondary Enrollment, 2011-2019



Statewide, immediate college enrollment steadily declined from 2011–2019, driven by declines in two-year college enrollment and increases to workforce entry.

Number of High School Graduates Who Enroll in College and Remain In-State, 2011-2019



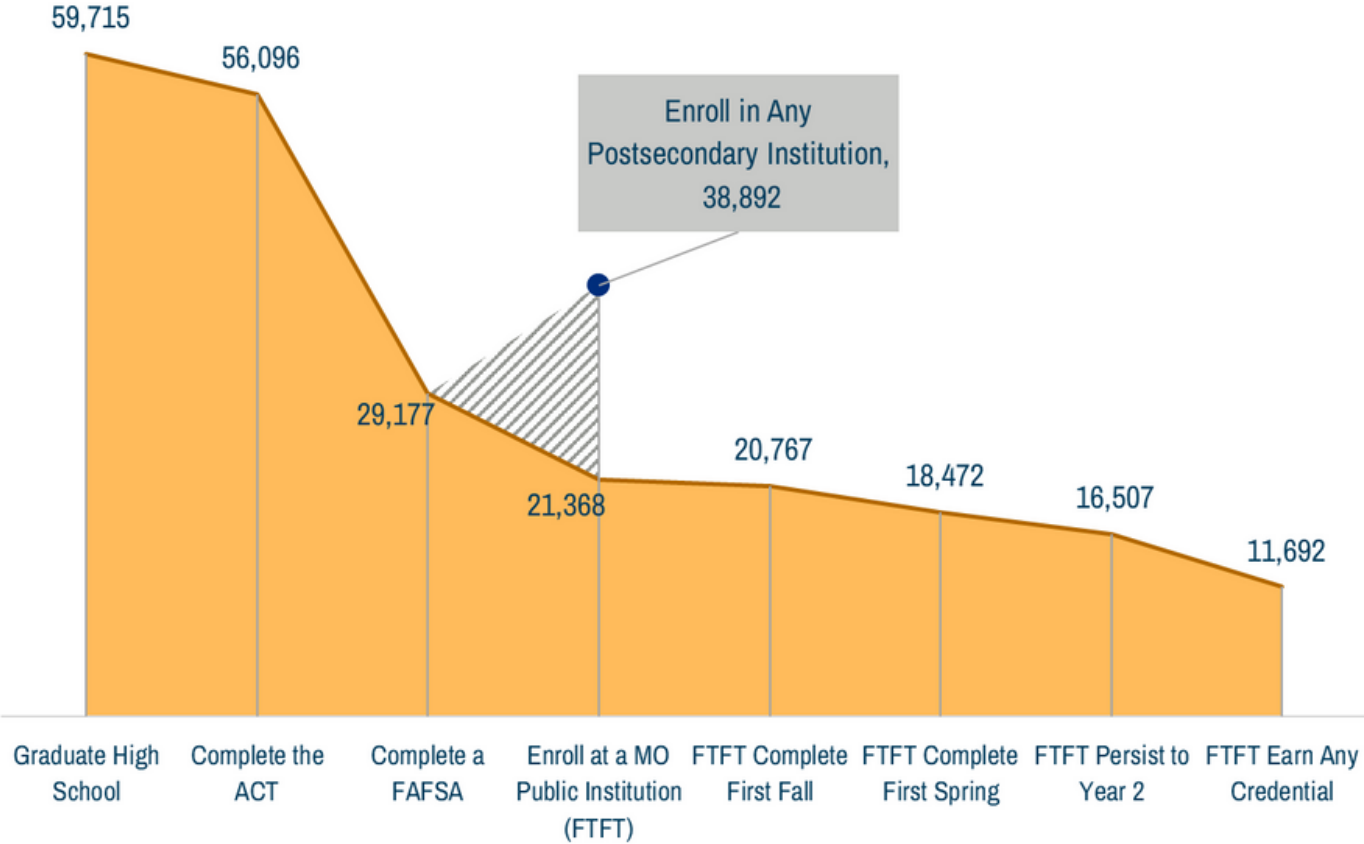
A considerable share of Missouri graduates who immediately enroll in college leave the state each year.

Postsecondary Pipeline

In our Postsecondary Success Report we examined trends over time within the state of Missouri, providing an in-depth examination of how these results vary by high school characteristics such as racial composition and income levels. We highlighted outcomes for the high school graduating class of 2015—the most recent cohort of postsecondary enrollees to exhibit 6-year completion rates at the time of the report's publication.

Students encounter multiple steps during college on the pipeline to degree completion; students exit at each of these steps, and who exits the pipeline at each step varies by characteristics of the high schools they graduated from. Of the nearly 60,000 students in the high school graduating class of 2015, just over 21,000 students (55% of college enrollees) opted to enroll in Missouri public institutions of higher education (IHEs). Of these students who enrolled in postsecondary education at one of the state's public IHEs, about 16,500 (77%) persisted to their second year and fewer than 12,000 (55%) have earned a postsecondary degree six years after starting. Importantly, for first-time full-time (FTFT) students attending public IHEs in Missouri, approximately one in four students are not persisting to their second year and nearly one in two students are not completing college.

High School Graduating Class of 2015 Postsecondary Pipeline: Nearly One in Two Students Who Attend an In-State IHE Are Not Completing College



For Missouri's first-time full-time (FTFT) students attending public IHEs, nearly one in two students are not completing college.

FTFT Persistence and Completion Rates (Class of 2015) Vary by High School Racial Composition

	FTFT Cohort (n) Class of 2015	First Fall Completion Rate	First Spring Completion Rate	Second Year Persistence Rate	Complete Any Credential
Statewide	21,368	97%	86%	77%	55%
>90% White	7,866	96%	86%	75%	55%
High Concentration White	5,525	98%	88%	80%	57%
Reflective of State	3,940	98%	89%	82%	60%
High Concentration Students of Color	3,286	97%	85%	76%	49%
>90% Students of Color	751	97%	80%	64%	27%

Note: The bubble size is based on the size of the FTFT cohort for each category of students. The bubble size decreases as students exit out of the postsecondary pipeline.

In-state, public FTFT college persistence and completion rates vary by high school racial composition and income level of high school. Students from high schools that serve a student body reflective of state demographics experience a completion rate of 60%, similar to the statewide completion rate of 55%, while students from schools that serve a high concentration of Students of Color (30-89%) or a student body with more than 90% Students of Color have a completion rate of 49% and 27% respectively. Similarly, students from high schools with lower levels of income also experience inequitable attainment. Students from the low and lowest income high schools have a completion rate of 42% and 48% respectively.

FTFT Persistence and Completion Rates (Class of 2015) Vary by Income Level of High School

	FTFT Cohort (n) Class of 2015	First Fall Completion Rate	First Spring Completion Rate	Second Year Persistence Rate	Complete Any Credential
Statewide	21,368	97%	86%	77%	55%
Lowest Income	1,108	95%	79%	68%	42%
Low Income	3,681	96%	83%	71%	48%
Median Income	9,243	97%	86%	76%	53%
High Income	5,252	98%	89%	82%	60%
Highest Income	2,084	99%	93%	86%	65%

Note: The bubble size is based on the size of the FTFT cohort for each category of students. The bubble size decreases as students exit out of the postsecondary pipeline.

5

EDUCATION FINANCE

Per Pupil Expenditures: National Data

Using the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Missouri increased spending per pupil by \$363 from \$11,034 to \$11,397 between 2017-18 and 2019-20. Still, Missouri lagged behind the national average per pupil expenditures by \$2,092 and the border state average by \$524. Missouri ranked 5th among its eight border states for per pupil expenditures in 2019-20.

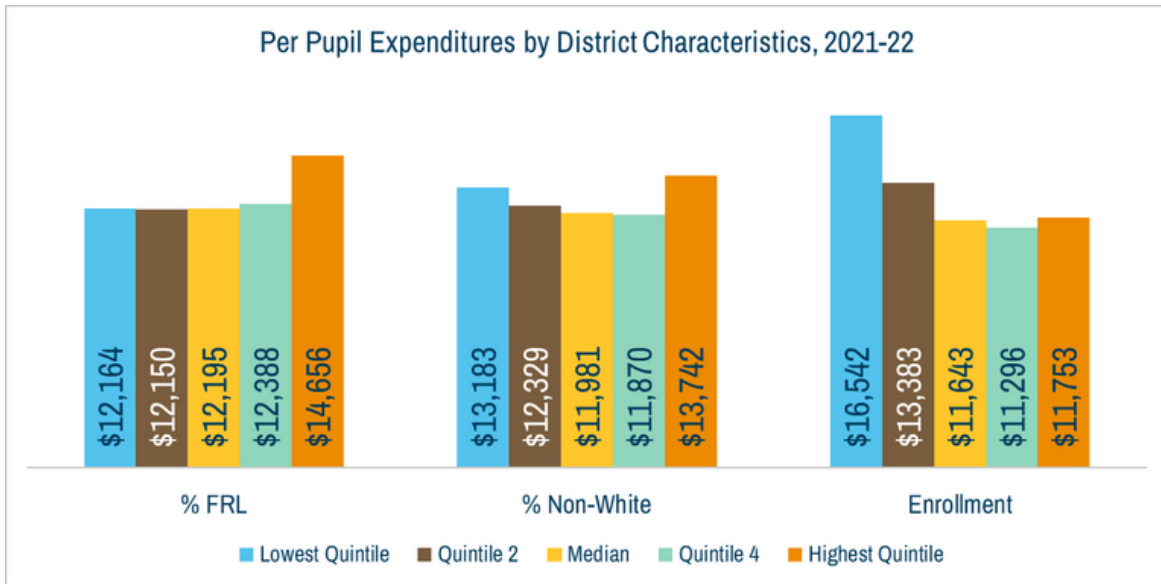
Per Pupil Expenditures, 2017-18 to 2019-20,
Missouri, Nation, and Border States

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Missouri	\$11,034	\$11,349	\$11,397
National Average	\$12,649	\$13,189	\$13,489
Border Average	\$11,321	\$11,641	\$11,921
Illinois	\$15,912	\$16,281	\$17,483
Nebraska	\$12,813	\$12,746	\$12,829
Iowa	\$11,095	\$11,328	\$11,960
Kentucky	\$9,599	\$9,941	\$9,974
Kansas	\$11,724	\$11,933	\$11,986
Arkansas	\$8,174	\$9,203	\$9,395
Tennessee	\$11,081	\$11,280	\$11,370
Oklahoma	\$10,168	\$10,412	\$10,369

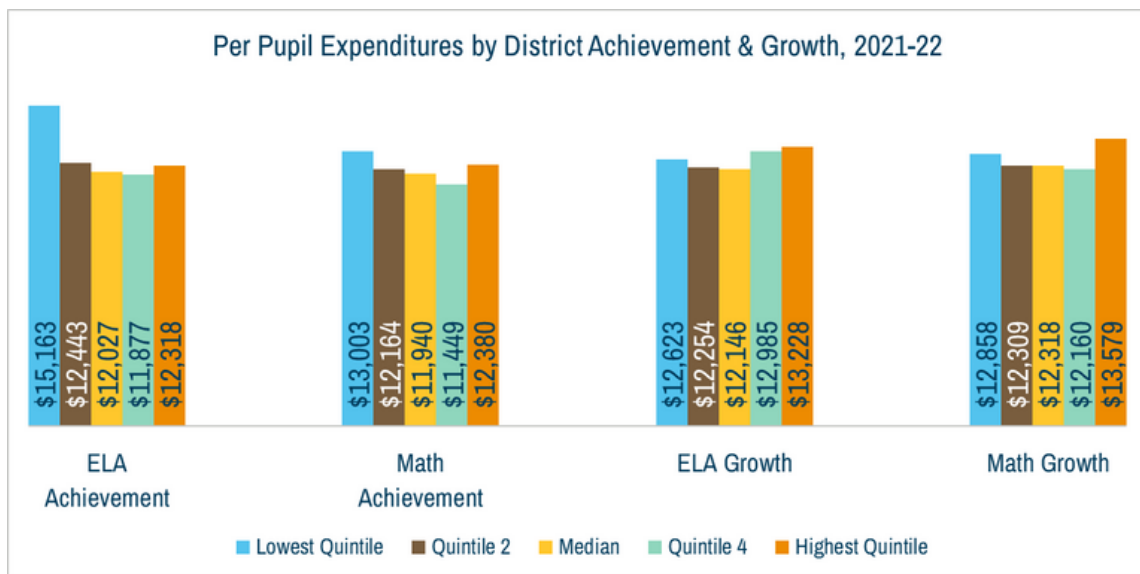
According to the most recent year of national data, Missouri lagged behind the nation and border states average in per student spending.

Note: The bubble size is based on 2019-20 ranking of per pupil expenditures for border states, nation, and Missouri.

Per Pupil Expenditures: Missouri Data



The most recent DESE data indicates the average school district in Missouri spent \$13,139 per pupil. When excluding the Special School District of St. Louis County, the average was \$12,680. Spending based on district characteristics did not vary beyond what might be expected. Schools with more low-income students and those with lower enrollment spent more per student. Per pupil spending was higher in school districts that had the lowest ELA achievement; these districts spent roughly \$3,000 more per pupil. A similar pattern emerged for districts with the lowest math achievement spending more per student, though the difference was not as dramatic. Districts that experienced the largest gains in ELA and math spent the most per student. Similar to our findings in the 2020 Missouri Profile, districts in the second highest math growth and academic achievement quintile spent the least of all districts in the state.



Per pupil spending was higher in school districts that had the lowest ELA achievement, with these districts often spending roughly \$3,000 more per pupil.

COVID-Relief Funding

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund grants were two ways the federal government supported elementary and secondary education during the COVID-19 pandemic. ESSER grants (all three iterations) were awarded to state educational agencies for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 had on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. Similarly, GEER funds (both iterations) were awarded to states' governor's offices to support the state's population of individuals aged 5-24 and LEAs and essential education-related entities most significantly impacted by COVID-19. ESSER funds were allocated to states based on specific proportions defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), while GEER funds were allocated based on a formula which included the state's population of 5- to 24-year-olds and number of children counted under ESEA.

ESSER and Governor's Education Relief Funds, Missouri and Border States, Overall and Per Capita

	Missouri	Illinois	Tennessee	Kentucky	Oklahoma	Arkansas	Kansas	Iowa	Nebraska
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund	\$3,038,000,000	\$7,879,000,000	\$3,857,000,000	\$3,123,000,000	\$2,321,000,000	\$1,941,000,000	\$1,286,000,000	\$1,192,000,000	\$854,000,000
ESSER Per Capita	\$495	\$622	\$565	\$699	\$586	\$643	\$441	\$378	\$442
Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund	\$283,000,000	\$374,000,000	\$265,000,000	\$164,000,000	\$138,000,000	\$103,000,000	\$103,000,000	\$102,000,000	\$65,000,000
GEER Fund Per Capita	\$39	\$29	\$39	\$37	\$35	\$34	\$35	\$32	\$34

Missouri received over \$3 billion in ESSER funding and more than \$200 million in GEER funding. Five of Missouri's border states had higher per capita ESSER funding, while Missouri tied for the highest per capita GEER funding.

ESSER II has an allocation deadline of September 30, 2023 and a spending deadline of January 28, 2024. ESSER III, the largest allocation of the three, has an allocation deadline of September 30, 2024 and a January 28, 2025 spending deadline. GEER II had an allocation deadline of January 2023 and has a spending deadline of September 30, 2023. States lagging behind in spending may be granted extensions.

According to the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), LEAs have spent the majority of funds on accelerated and extended learning time, such as tutoring and after-school programs. Other state priorities include recruitment, retention, and support for school staff, as well as student and staff wellbeing.

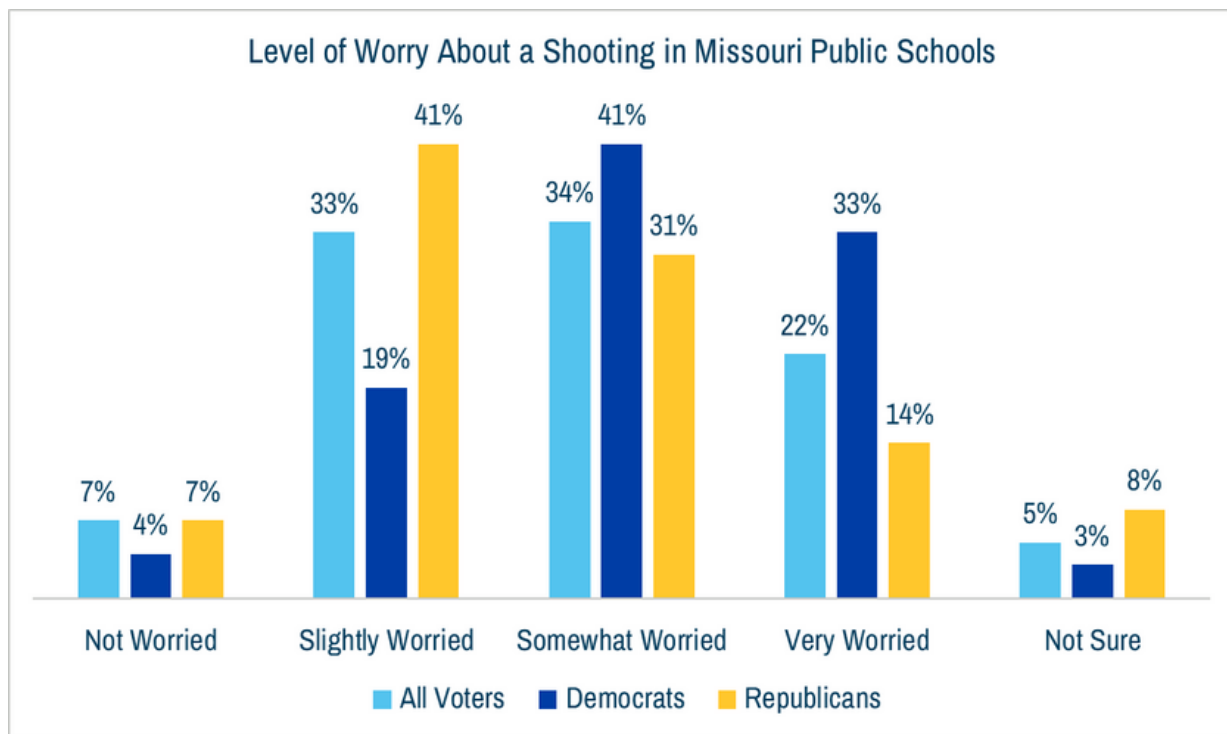
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6

VOTER OPINIONS ON EDUCATION ISSUES

School Safety

The [February 2023 SLU/YouGov Poll](#) interviewed 900 likely Missouri voters about issues facing the Missouri legislature and their opinions about school safety and guns, following the October school shooting at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School. The survey found 56% of voters were somewhat or very worried about a shooting happening at Missouri schools, and there was bipartisan support for safety and gun reforms.

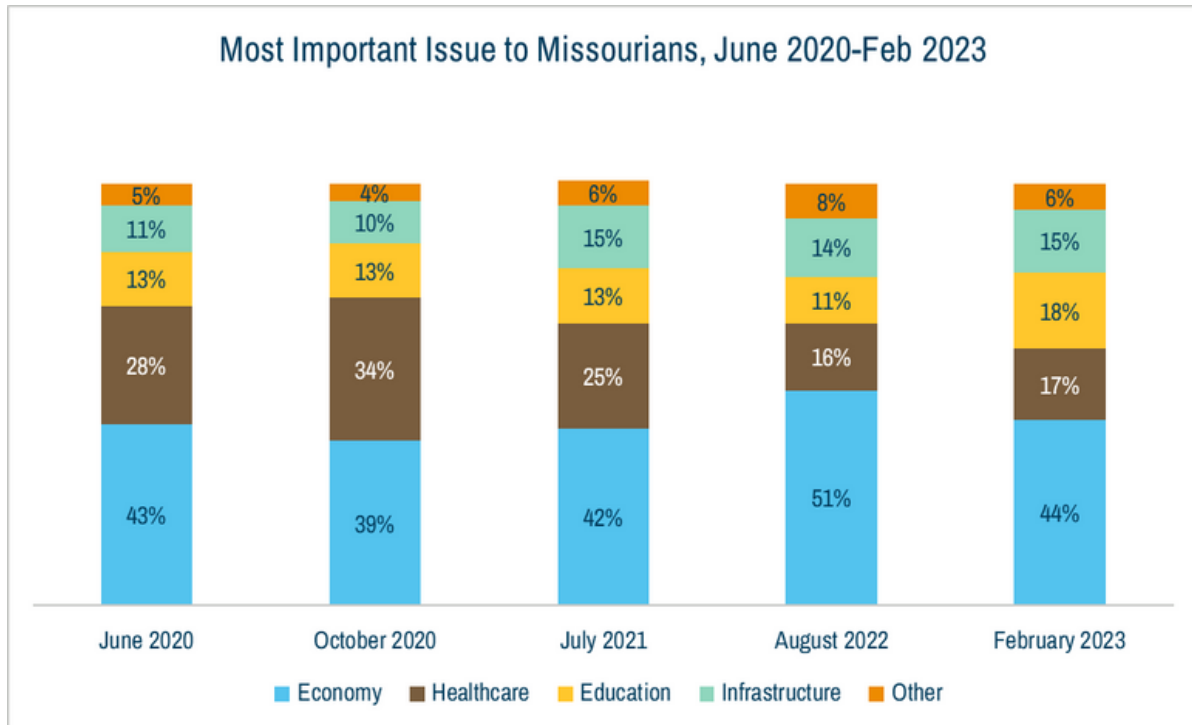


Key School Safety Findings:

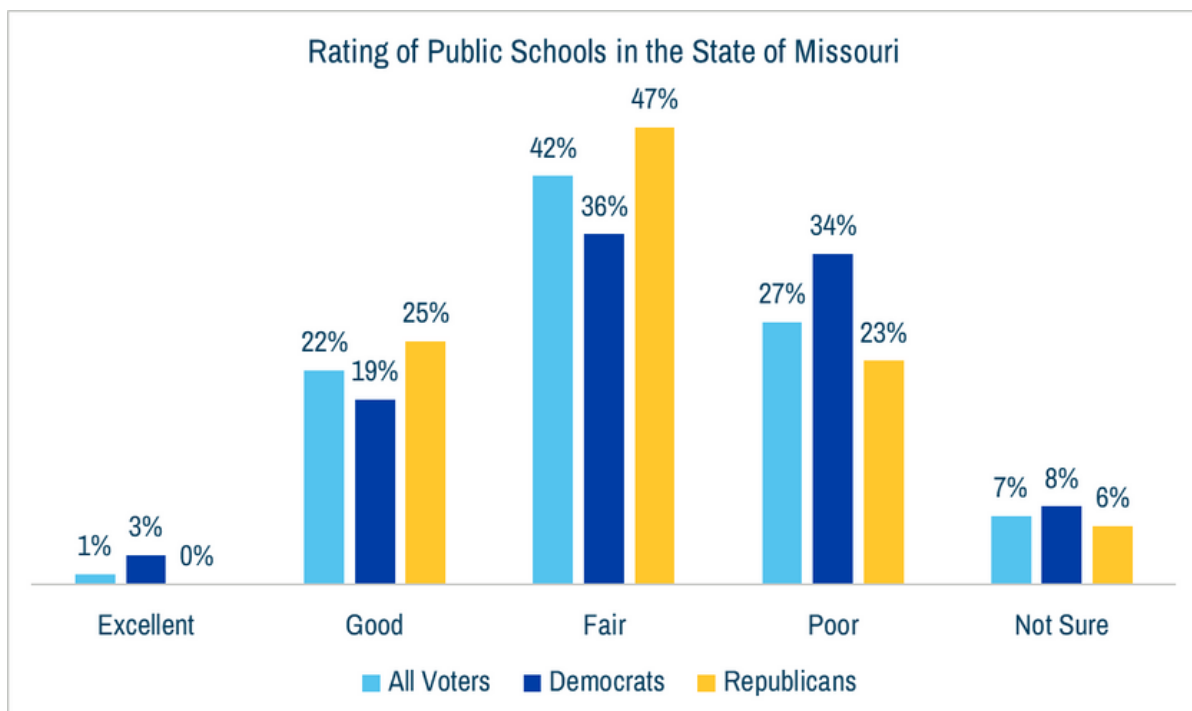
- At least 57% of Republican, Democratic, and Independent voters support requiring schools to have metal detectors, security cameras, and a police officer on campus.
- Sixty-seven percent of voters also support requiring visitors to schools to receive pre-approval from the school before visiting.
- Forty-eight percent of voters support “allowing teachers and school administrators to carry guns in schools;” 37% oppose.

Education as a State Priority and the Condition of Education

For the first time in the history of the SLU/YouGov Poll, education was the second highest-rated important issue, after the economy. Eighteen percent of voters indicated it was the most important issue.



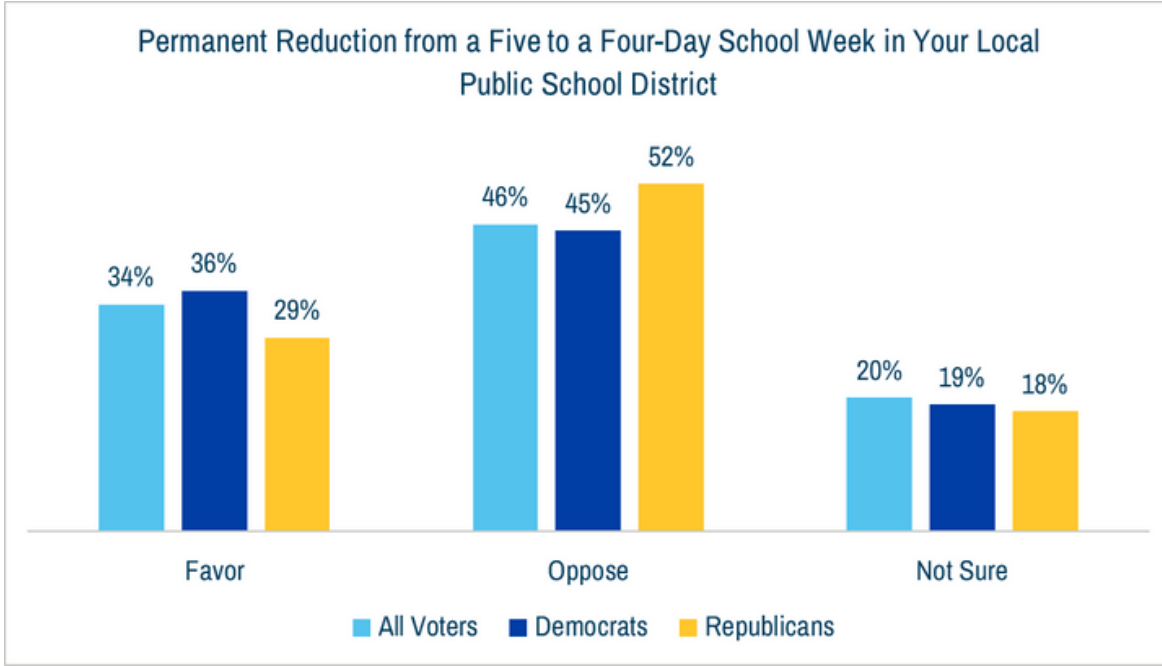
The SLUYouGov Poll asked Missourians to rate the condition of education across the state. Overall, 69% of voters rated Missouri public schools as "fair" or "poor." This finding was consistent with Democrat and Republican voters.



69% of voters rated Missouri public schools as "fair" or "poor."

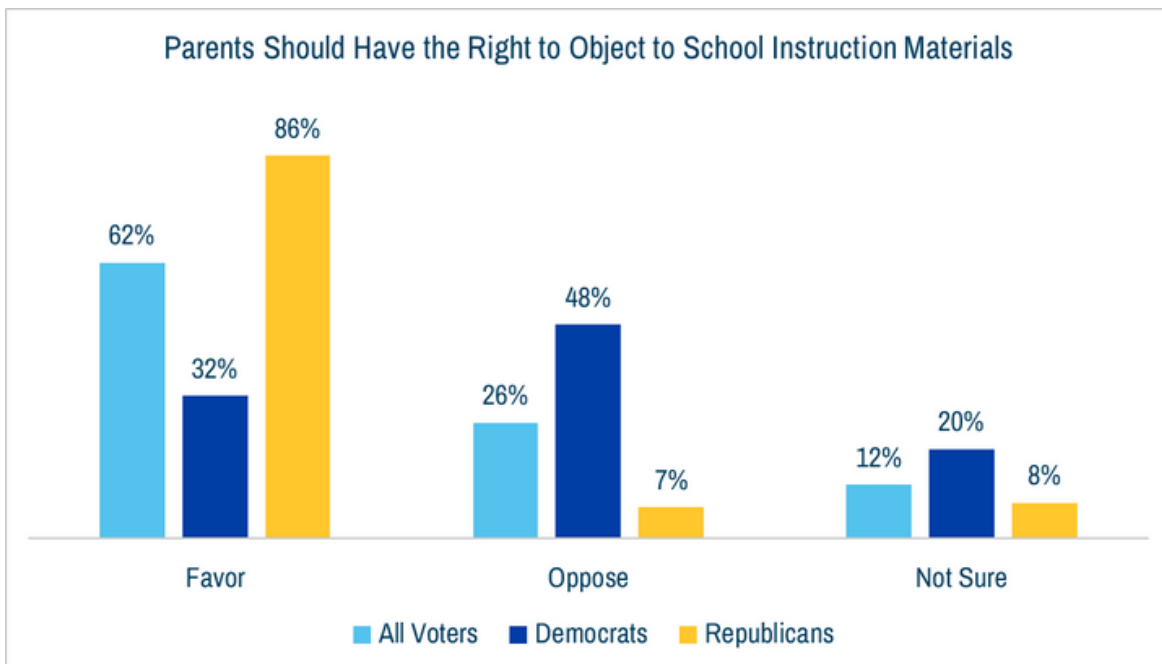
Four-Day School Week

Four-day school weeks have been on the minds of many Missourians as an increasing number of districts have made the switch. A plurality of voters (46%) oppose a permanent reduction from a five to a four-day school week, while 34% favor this reform and 20% are unsure. These results were fairly consistent across Democrat and Republican voters.



Parents' Rights

Reflecting voters' dissatisfaction with some schools, 62% of voters agreed with the statement, "Parents of students should have the right to object to instructional materials used in their child's classroom." More than four of five (86%) Republican voters agree while approximately one in three (32%) Democrats agree.





RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our intention with the 2023 Missouri Education Profile is to provide a high-level overview of Missouri's education landscape in key areas for all stakeholders—educators, administrators, families, policymakers, and researchers alike. When possible, we make comparisons to border states and the nation so that readers can see how our state stacks up, recognizing that data availability may differ or lag. We encourage our audience to use this profile as a guide for diving deeper into specific issues, and we recommend more closely examining regional, district, and building-level data before making any local decisions. Overall, we hope this work is helpful in informing conversations on education issues.

In the coming months, PRiME will be exploring many of the topics highlighted in this profile in more depth, as we continue to make sense of the new and existing trends evident after the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we plan to publish about:

- Teacher Supply & Demand
- Student Growth & Achievement
- Enrollment Trends
- Postsecondary Access & Success

Finally, we're ever curious to see how readers engage with our work. Please let us know your thoughts, feelings, and questions about this profile by contacting us directly or via social media. Thank you for reading!

Data Sources

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
National College Attainment Network
National Education Association
National Student Clearinghouse
SLU/YouGov Poll
Title II
United States Census Bureau
United States Department of Education

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PRiME CENTER

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Who We Are

The Policy Research in Missouri Education (PRiME) Center is a non-partisan research center housed in the Saint Louis University School of Education. Opened in the Spring of 2019, we are wholly committed to conducting and sharing research that leads to better policies, educational outcomes, and opportunities for all students.

What We Do

We conduct and share research on education. We help lawmakers, educators, and families in the state of Missouri make decisions about education policy and practice. Our mission is to ensure that the people making decisions and building policies around education have the relevant data and evidence they need to build the best and most equitable educational systems possible.