

# Executive summary

This executive summary provides data and an analysis of trends across Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS), based on data in this and previous A+ Schools reports. While this summary does not address every indicator, we hope it will help readers who want to look more closely at progress and take action to address areas of concern.

In this summary, you'll learn about:

- The characteristics of the district, and enrollment trends
- Measures of school climates:
  - Teachers' perceptions of their schools
  - Whether students attend school regularly
  - The overall percentage of students who were suspended last year, and which students were suspended
- Key academic indicators:
  - Whether students are growing academically according to value-added measures
  - Which students are on track to meet the state's academic targets
  - The extent to which students reached academic milestones: reading well by 3rd grade, taking algebra in 8th grade, and graduating ready for college and careers

## Key takeaways

- Enrollment rose slightly last year.
- Overall, more 3rd graders are reading at grade level compared to 3 years ago.
- Too few students are doing math at grade level.
- Graduation rates continue to improve.
- Black students' success varies widely by school.

## Findings for the 2018 Report to the Community

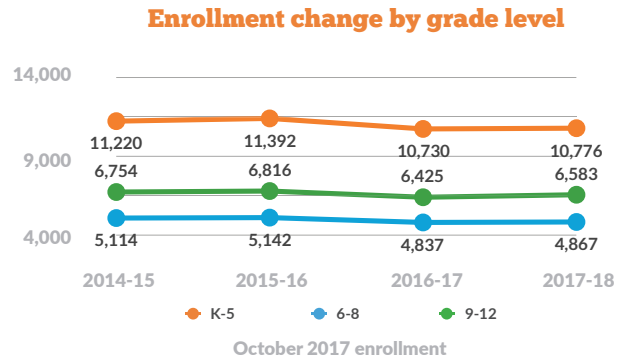
### Characteristics of the district, and enrollment trends

The table below describes the general student population within each type of school configuration (K-5, K-8...) in PPS (excluding special schools and placements) in the 2017-18 school year. Compared to last year, the diversity of the PPS student population has remained about the same. The rate of economically disadvantaged students rose by 8 percentage points.

#### Student demographic information at each grade-level configuration for 2017-18

	Number of schools	Range of enrollment	Percent black	Percent white	Percent multi-ethnic	Percent Asian	Percent Hispanic	Percent economically disadvantaged	Per pupil spending
District	50	178 to 1,577	53%	32%	8%	4%	3%	71%	\$9,737
K-5	23	189 to 565	55%	28%	9%	4%	4%	77%	\$9,855
K-8	11	213 to 907	48%	35%	10%	4%	2%	70%	\$9,305
6-8	7	178 to 476	54%	31%	8%	4%	4%	79%	\$9,926
6-12	5	443 to 977	63%	28%	6%	1%	2%	60%	\$10,300
9-12	4	513 to 1,577	44%	40%	7%	5%	4%	66%	\$9,219

The chart to the right shows that district enrollment is beginning to level off from decreases in past years. In 2017-18, enrollment increased by 234 students. Overall, district enrollment is down 862 students since the 2014-15 school year.

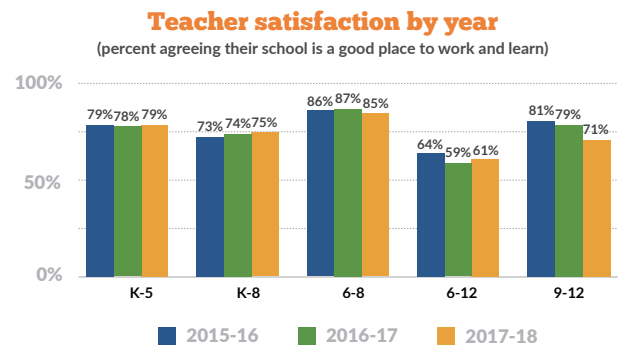


Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

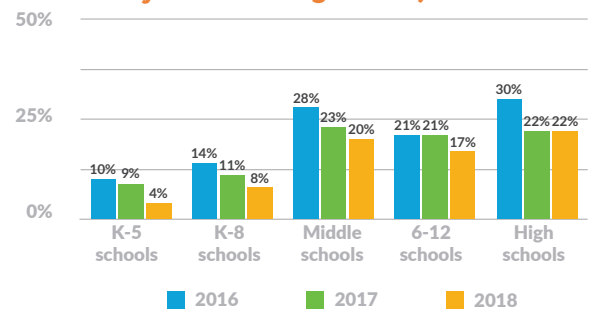
## School climate

### Teaching

Overall, 60% of teachers performed at the “Distinguished” level last year. Performance levels are based on observation of teaching practices, student perceptions, student learning and growth data, and/or student learning objectives set by the teacher and principal. In addition to annual evaluations of teaching practice, teachers provide feedback about their experiences through a Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey. The chart on the right shows the percentage of teachers in 2016, 2017, and 2018 who agreed with the statement, “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.” Satisfaction in schools with grades K-5, K-8, and 6-8 continues to remain high. Our 6-12 and 9-12 schools have seen declines in teacher satisfaction over the past 3 years.



### Students who were suspended at least once, by school configuration, 2016-18

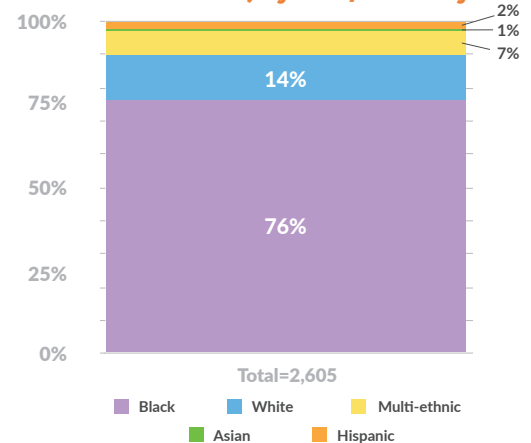


### Suspensions

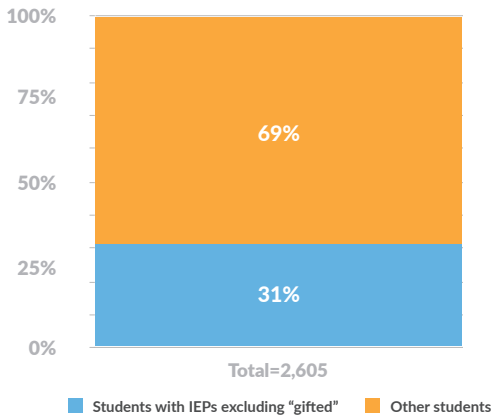
The chart on the right shows the percentage of students who were suspended at least once, by school configuration, over the past 3 school years. Suspensions have decreased significantly across all school configurations since 2016.

The following charts show which students were suspended at least once by race, by students receiving special education services (excluding “gifted”), and by economic disadvantage. Black students make up 53% of the district but account for 76% of all students suspended at least once. Compared to white students, black students were over 5 times more likely to be suspended. Students with non-gifted IEPs (Individual Education Plans) account for 21% of the overall PPS student population, but represent 31% of all students suspended at least once. Economically disadvantaged students represent 71% of the overall student population, but represent 88% of the students suspended.

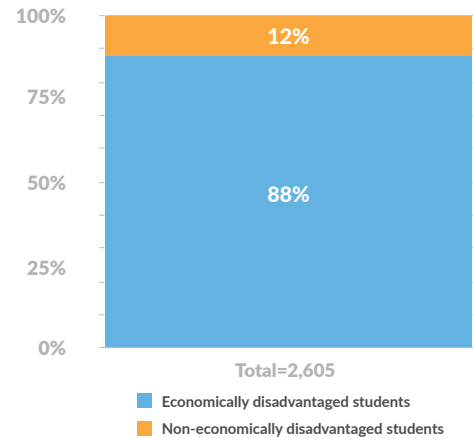
### Students who were suspended at least once, by race/ethnicity



### Students who were suspended at least once, by non-gifted IEP



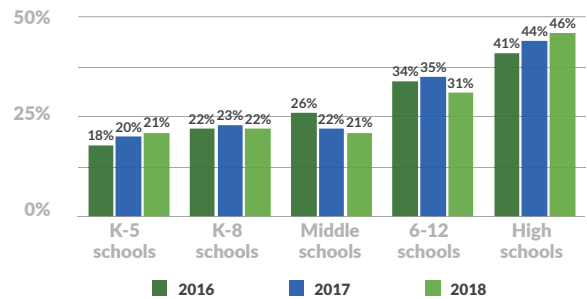
### Students who were suspended at least once, by economic disadvantage



### Absenteeism

The chart to the right shows the percentage of students who were chronically absent (missing 10% or more of school days, or 2 days per month) by school configuration over the past 3 years. Research shows that students who are chronically absent, regardless of the reason, are less likely to read on grade level by 3rd grade, which in turn can lead to other school-related problems. High schools continue to have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism at 46%, up 5% from 2016.

### Chronic absenteeism over time, by school configuration

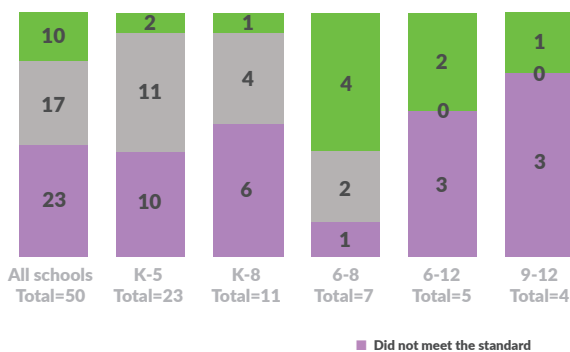


## Key academic indicators

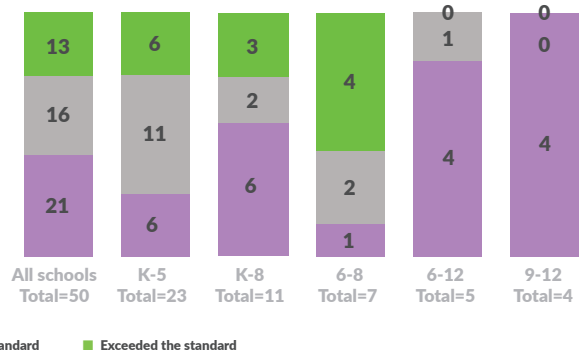
### Growth as determined by the PA Value-Added Assessment System

The Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) provides us with an estimate of each school's contribution to student academic growth (see page 114 for more information). The charts below show the number of schools in each configuration whose contribution to student academic growth either met, exceeded, or didn't meet the state standard on PSSA and Keystone Reading and Math assessments in 2017-18.

### ELA/Literature PVAAS



### Math/Algebra I PVAAS



### Progress toward meeting new state academic targets

In 2017, Pennsylvania submitted a plan for academic improvement to the US Department of Education, as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). One portion of the plan required goals for student proficiency by 2030, for each subgroup. Using 2015 as its baseline year, the state set relative goals for each subgroup based on where students were in 2015. The table below shows the state's baseline scores for subgroups in 2015 and PPS scores in 2018. Scores are color-coded by whether each subgroup met its 2030 target in reading and math (blue), is on track to meeting its 2030 target (green), or is not on track to meet its 2030 target (yellow).

### Progress toward state ESSA plan ELA targets, by subgroup, percent Proficient/Advanced

	2015 State baseline scores	2030 State goals	2018 PPS Proficient/Advanced
Black	35.9%	68%	35%
White	69.4%	84.7%	70%
Multi-ethnic	55%	77.5%	55%
Hispanic	40%	70%	46%
Asian	77.9%	89%	60%
Native American	55.3%	77.7%	47%
Pacific Islander	70%	85%	85%
IEP (excluding "gifted")	25.3%	62.7%	19%

■ Not on track   
 ■ On track   
 ■ Met state 2030 target

### Progress toward state ESSA plan Math targets, by subgroup, percent Proficient/Advanced

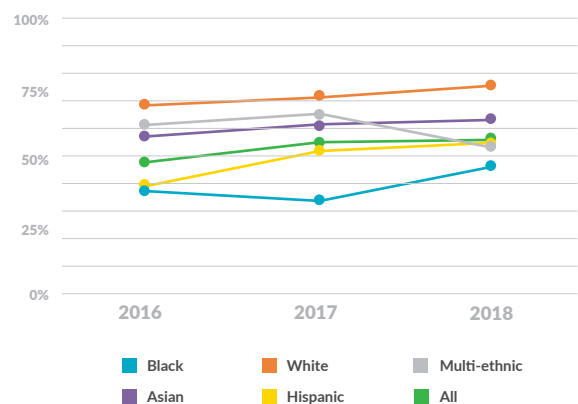
	2015 State baseline scores	2030 State goals	2018 PPS Proficient/Advanced
Black	17.1%	58.6%	18%
White	50.5%	75.3%	53%
Multi-ethnic	35.2%	67.6%	35%
Hispanic	22.7%	61.4%	31%
Asian	68.4%	84.2%	53%
Native American	35%	67.5%	27%
Pacific Islander	50.2%	75.1%	36%
IEP (excluding "gifted")	17.2%	58.6%	18%

■ Not on track   
 ■ On track   
 ■ Met state 2030 target

### Third grade reading

Reading fluency by 3rd grade is important as students move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Reading on grade level by 3rd grade is highly correlated to graduating on time and later school success. This past year we saw continued improvement in overall 3rd grade reading scores across all subgroups, except for multi-ethnic students (see the chart on the right). While the 3-year trend shows improvement, 641 3rd graders did not score "Proficient" or better on the PSSA in 2018.

### 3rd grade Reading by race/ethnicity, 2016-18

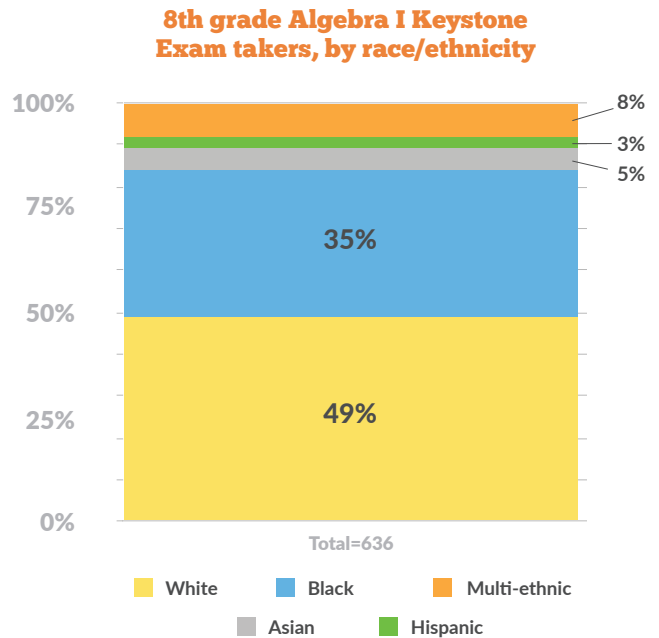


## Middle grades math

We looked at middle grades math achievement in 3 ways: PSSA scores, algebra course taking, and participation in and scores on the 8th grade Algebra I Keystone Exam. When looking at PSSA data, **76% of 6th-8th graders, or 3,789 students**, were not achieving at grade level in math in 2018.

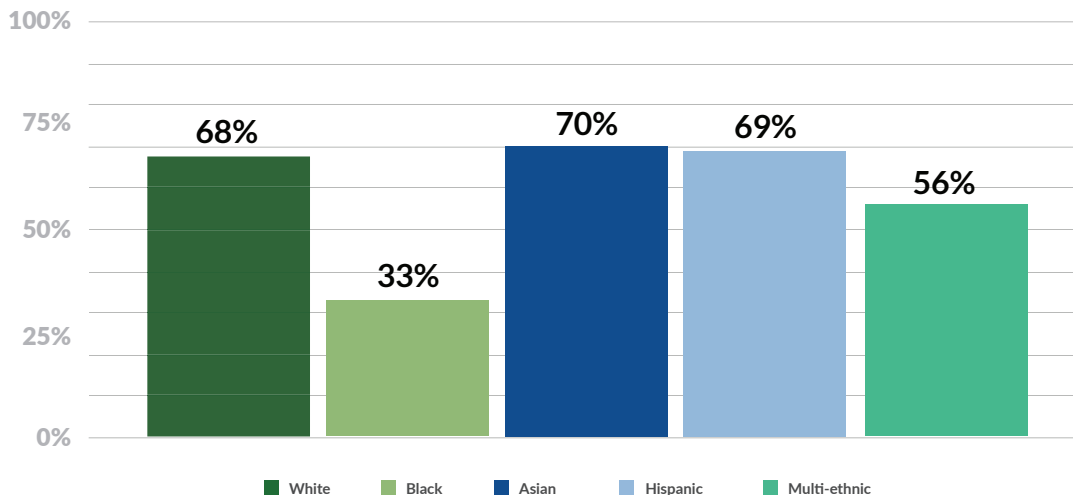
Taking and successfully completing algebra by 8th grade opens up opportunities for students to take college preparatory math in high school. Compared to 2017, the percentage of K-8, 6-8, and 9-12 students who took algebra by the end of 8th grade (out of the total number of 8th graders) rose slightly, from 37% to 39%.

The chart to the right shows the number of students who took the Algebra I Keystone Exam in 8th grade in 2018, by subgroup. While black students comprise 53% of all PPS 8th graders, they made up 35% of students who took the Algebra I Keystone Exam. By comparison, 49% of white students took the Algebra I Keystone Exam in 8th grade, though they represented 33% of all PPS 8th graders.



Of those who took the Algebra I Keystone, 347 or 55% of all takers scored in the Proficient or Advanced ranges on the test. Results were fairly similar for white, Asian, and Hispanic students. A smaller portion of black students who took the test in 8th grade passed, with a gap of 35 percentage points between white and black students.

## 8th grade Algebra I Keystone percent Proficient and Advanced

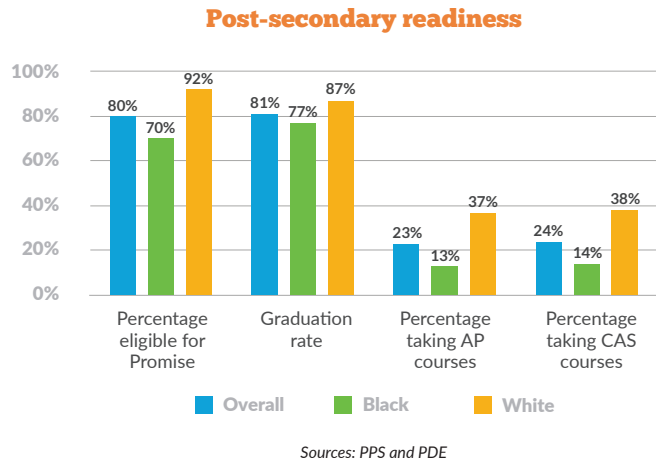


## Post-secondary readiness

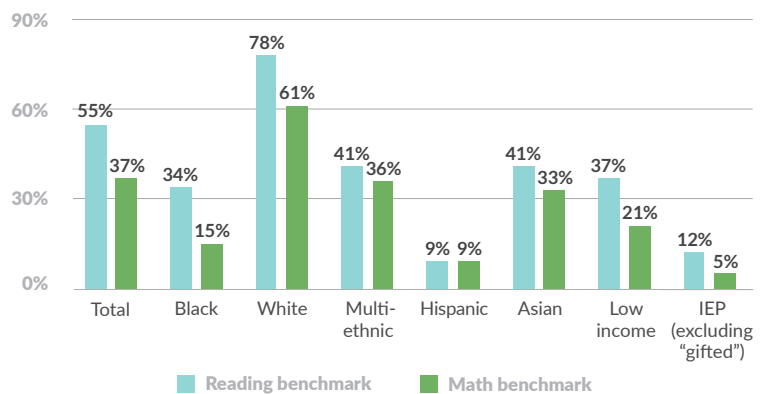
We looked at these indicators to describe post-secondary readiness: graduation rate, percentage of students qualifying for the Pittsburgh Promise by grade point average, percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) and Centers for Advanced Study (CAS) courses, and the percentage of students who met SAT college ready benchmarks.

Last year, PPS began participating in the College Board's SAT School Day Program, offering the SAT and PSAT to all PPS high school students during the school day. The graph to the right shows the percentage of students who met the SAT's College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for Evidence-based Reading and Writing, and for Math, by subgroup.

Finally, we wanted to know how many PPS students went to college and graduated. We looked at the 6-year college or trade school graduation rate provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). By 2018, 31% of PPS graduates from the class of 2012 had completed a 2- or 4-year college degree or trade school certificate. As a comparison, in 2017 nationally, 26% of students from low income schools such as Pittsburgh's completed college within the same time period, according to NSC data.



## Percent of 11th graders meeting SAT benchmarks



## Closing

We recognize that our vision of a school system where 100% of students graduate college and career ready, and at least 80% go on to complete college or trade school, is still not a reality. We also know that achieving this vision is not something that we at A+ Schools can do alone. We encourage readers to act on the information in this report so that we may create a greater collective impact for all students. Please consider what you can do by becoming a tutor, a middle school mentor, a classroom volunteer, an investor, and/or an advocate for change. Visit our Web site at [www.aplusschools.org](http://www.aplusschools.org) for more information on how you can get involved.

## Methodology

The executive summary analysis was conducted using data in the full report and previous reports as well as additional public data from PDE and data from PPS (see "Definitions and sources" on pages 114-115). The executive summary findings were developed by Sean Caulfield.