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# Trends in Academic Performance in Palo Alto Unified, California

VERSION 2025.1

This report summarizes district-level educational outcomes using data from the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) from 2009-2025. Figures may contain gaps where source data are unavailable.

For more information, please visit [edopportunity.org](https://edopportunity.org)

Report created by the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University in collaboration with the Education Scorecard at Harvard University, using data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Education Data Center. See final page for full information on data sources.

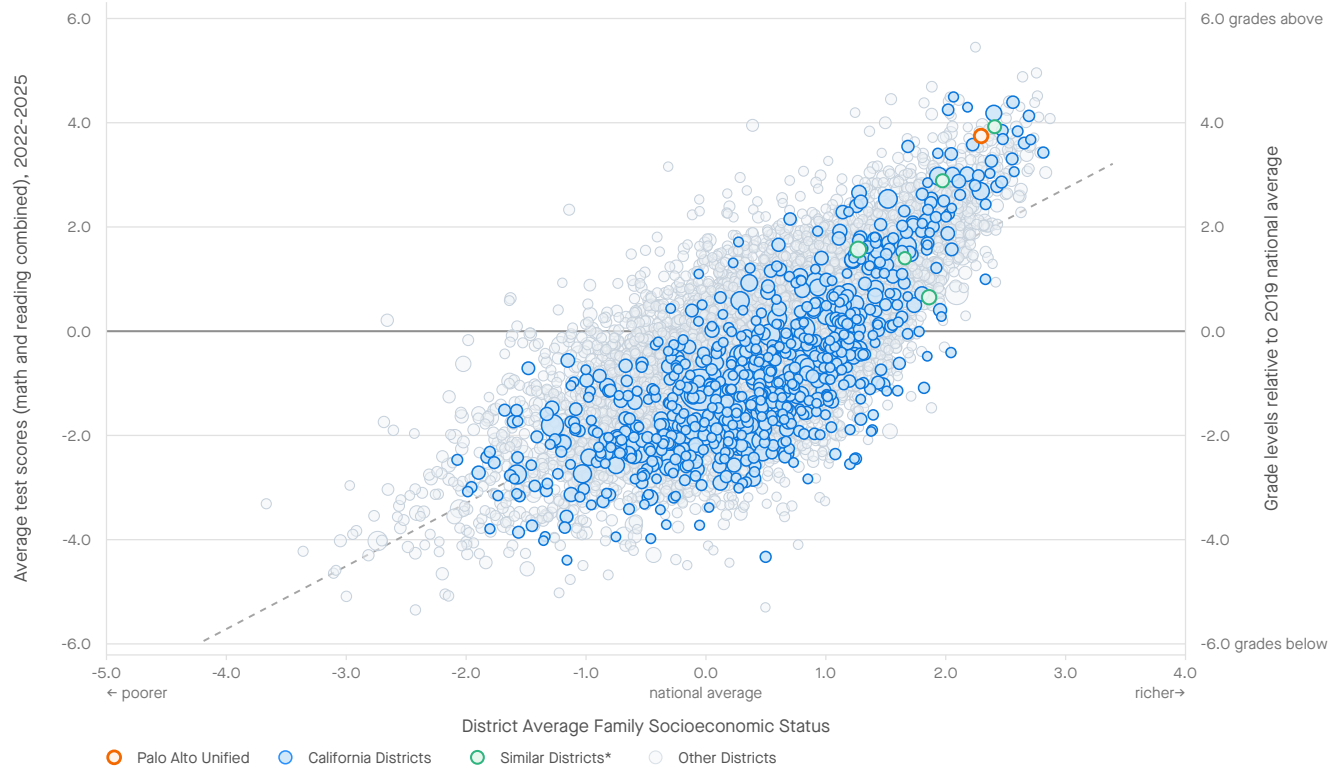


# Palo Alto Unified, California



## Average Grade 3-8 Test Scores, 2022-2025, by District Socioeconomic Status

Average test scores in grades 3-8 reflect the set of educational opportunities available to students in the district, including those provided by their families, preschools, neighborhoods, and elementary and middle schools.



Note: each bubble is a U.S. school district, with size proportional to district enrollment. Districts in California are highlighted. District socioeconomic status is a composite measure of a district's average family income, parental education, poverty rate, SNAP eligibility rate, unemployment rate, and female-headed household rate. Test scores are measured in grade levels relative to the 2019 national average.

## Average Test Scores and Trends, 2022-2025

### ALL STUDENTS

	2022-2025 Average Scores	2022-2025 Trend in Test Scores
<b>Palo Alto Unified</b>	3.75	0.06
<b>Similar Districts Avg.*</b>	1.85	-0.02
<b>California</b>	-0.72	0.02

Test scores are reported in grade level units, relative to the 2019 national average. For example, the first row above reads: "Students in Palo Alto Unified performed 3.75 grade levels above the 2019 national average. Test scores in Palo Alto Unified have been changing at a rate of +0.06 grade levels/year since 2022."

\*Similar districts are the nearest matches within the same state based on socioeconomic status, demographics, and size. Similar districts for Palo Alto Unified are Del Mar Union Elementary, Union Elementary, Santa Clara Unified, Moreland, and Torrance Unified.

### STUDENT SUBGROUPS

	2022-2025 Average Scores	2022-2025 Trend in Test Scores
<b>White</b>	3.30	0.06
<b>Black</b>	0.74	N/A
<b>Hispanic</b>	-0.01	-0.04
<b>Asian</b>	5.40	0.04
<b>Poor</b>	-0.15	0.12
<b>Non-Poor</b>	4.18	0.08
<b>Female</b>	3.90	0.03
<b>Male</b>	3.63	0.07



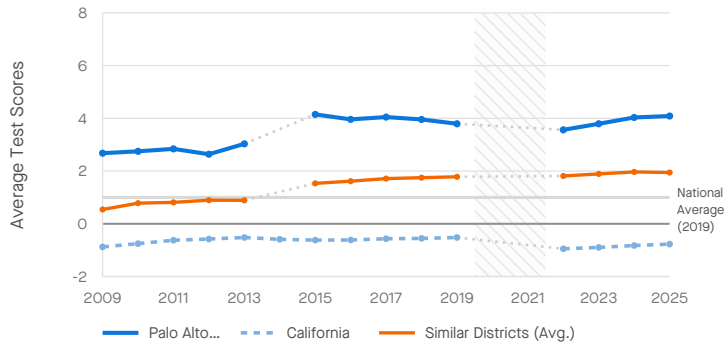
# Palo Alto Unified, California

## Trends in Average Grade 3-8 Test Scores, 2009-2025, by Subject and Student Subgroup

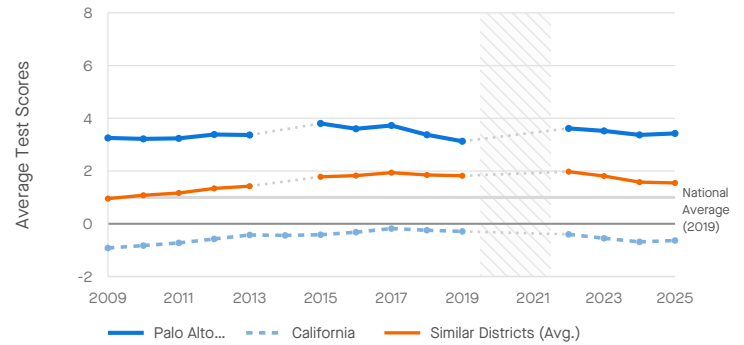


Trends in test scores may reflect changes in school quality, changes in demographics, and/or changes in out-of-school educational opportunities.

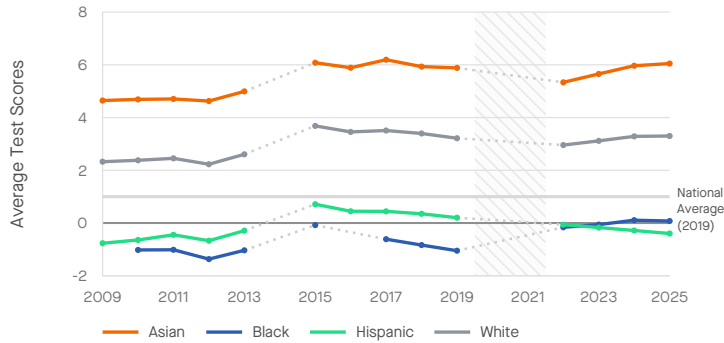
### Trend in Math Scores (All Students)



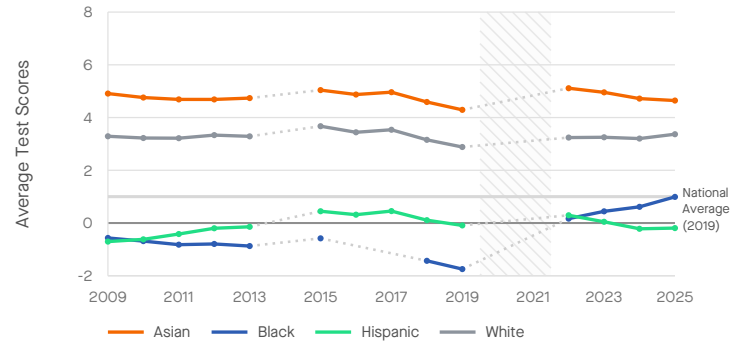
### Trend in Reading Scores (All Students)



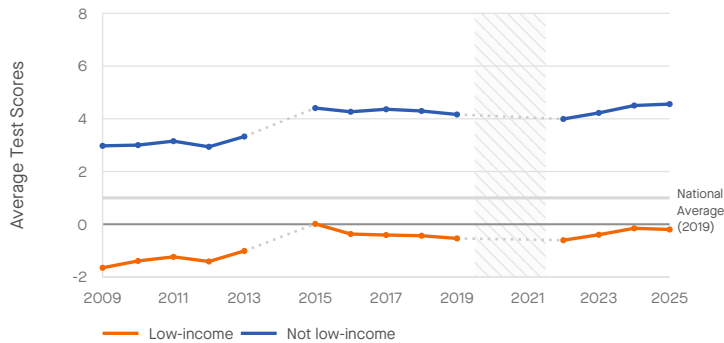
### Trend in Math Scores, by Student Race/Ethnicity



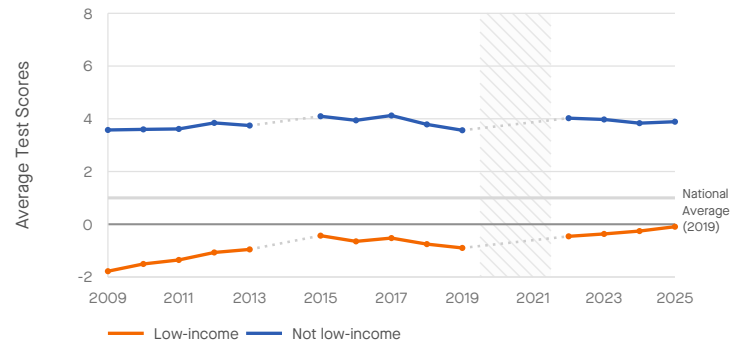
### Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Race/Ethnicity



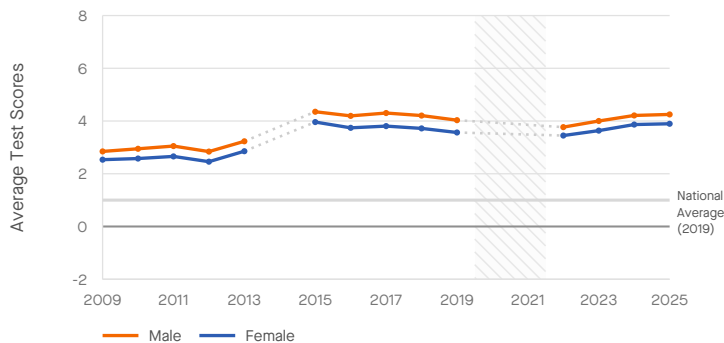
### Trend in Math Scores, by Student Income Level



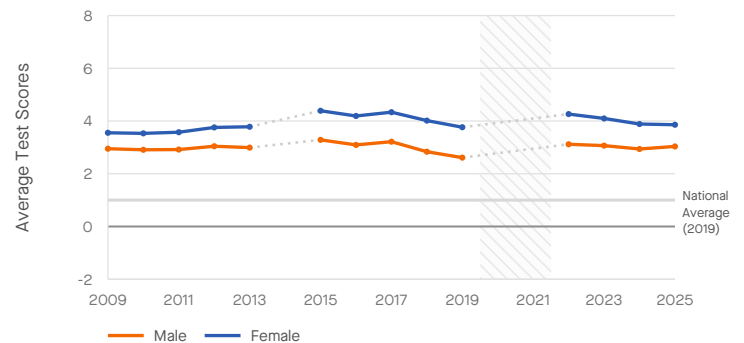
### Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Income Level



### Trend in Math Scores, by Student Gender



### Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Gender

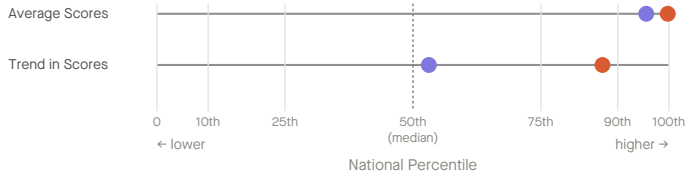


# Palo Alto Unified, California

## Academic Performance Rankings, 2022-2025, Relative to Other Districts in the U.S.



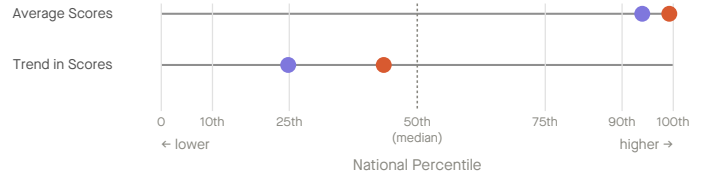
### Math Ranks



	Average	Trend
Palo Alto Unified	25 / 10,205 (100th pct)	711 / 5,468 (87th pct)
Similar Districts Avg.	454 / 10,205 (96th pct)	2,565 / 5,468 (53rd pct)

Palo Alto Unified ranked higher than 100% of districts nationwide in average math performance during the 2022-25 school years (25th of 10,205 districts with available data).

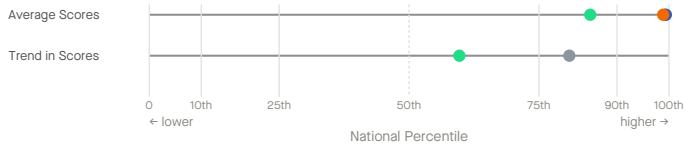
### Reading Ranks



	Average	Trend
Palo Alto Unified	79 / 10,076 (99th pct)	3,209 / 5,673 (43rd pct)
Similar Districts Avg.	611 / 10,076 (94th pct)	4,267 / 5,673 (25th pct)

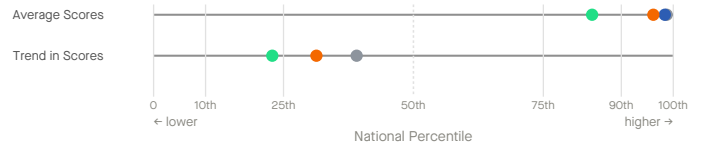
Palo Alto Unified ranked higher than 99% of districts nationwide in average reading performance during the 2022-25 school years (79th of 10,076 districts with available data).

### Math Ranks by Race/Ethnicity



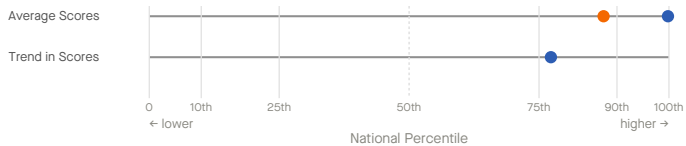
	Average	Trend
White	64 / 8,707 (99th pct)	688 / 3,582 (81st pct)
Black	16 / 2,508 (99th pct)	N/A
Hispanic	695 / 4,583 (85th pct)	537 / 1,330 (60th pct)
Asian	19 / 1,608 (99th pct)	N/A

### Reading Ranks by Race/Ethnicity



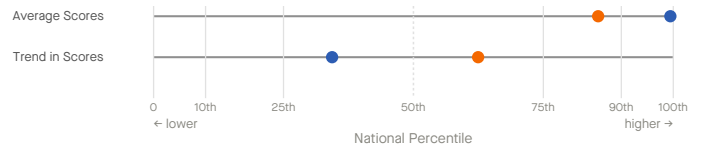
	Average	Trend
White	112 / 8,785 (99th pct)	2,402 / 3,941 (39th pct)
Black	44 / 2,644 (98th pct)	N/A
Hispanic	729 / 4,662 (84th pct)	1,081 / 1,400 (23rd pct)
Asian	64 / 1,642 (96th pct)	218 / 317 (31st pct)

### Math Ranks by Income



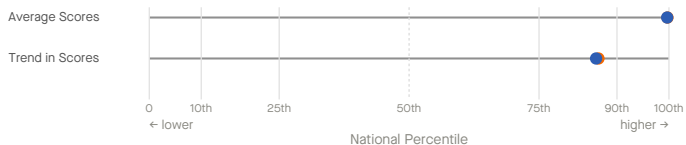
	Average	Trend
Low-income	1,118 / 8,875 (87th pct)	N/A
Not low-income	17 / 8,489 (100th pct)	711 / 3,127 (77th pct)

### Reading Ranks by Income



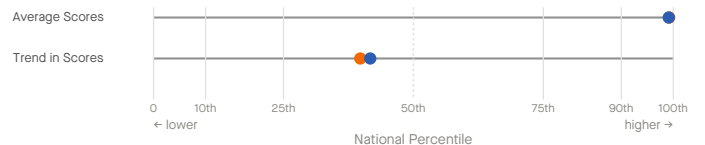
	Average	Trend
Low-income	1,300 / 8,987 (86th pct)	1,197 / 3,186 (62nd pct)
Not low-income	49 / 8,596 (99th pct)	2,174 / 3,311 (34th pct)

### Math Ranks by Gender



	Average	Trend
Female	26 / 8,509 (100th pct)	438 / 3,219 (86th pct)
Male	30 / 8,497 (100th pct)	418 / 2,971 (86th pct)

### Reading Ranks by Gender



	Average	Trend
Female	70 / 8,670 (99th pct)	2,098 / 3,483 (40th pct)
Male	76 / 8,652 (99th pct)	1,994 / 3,418 (42nd pct)

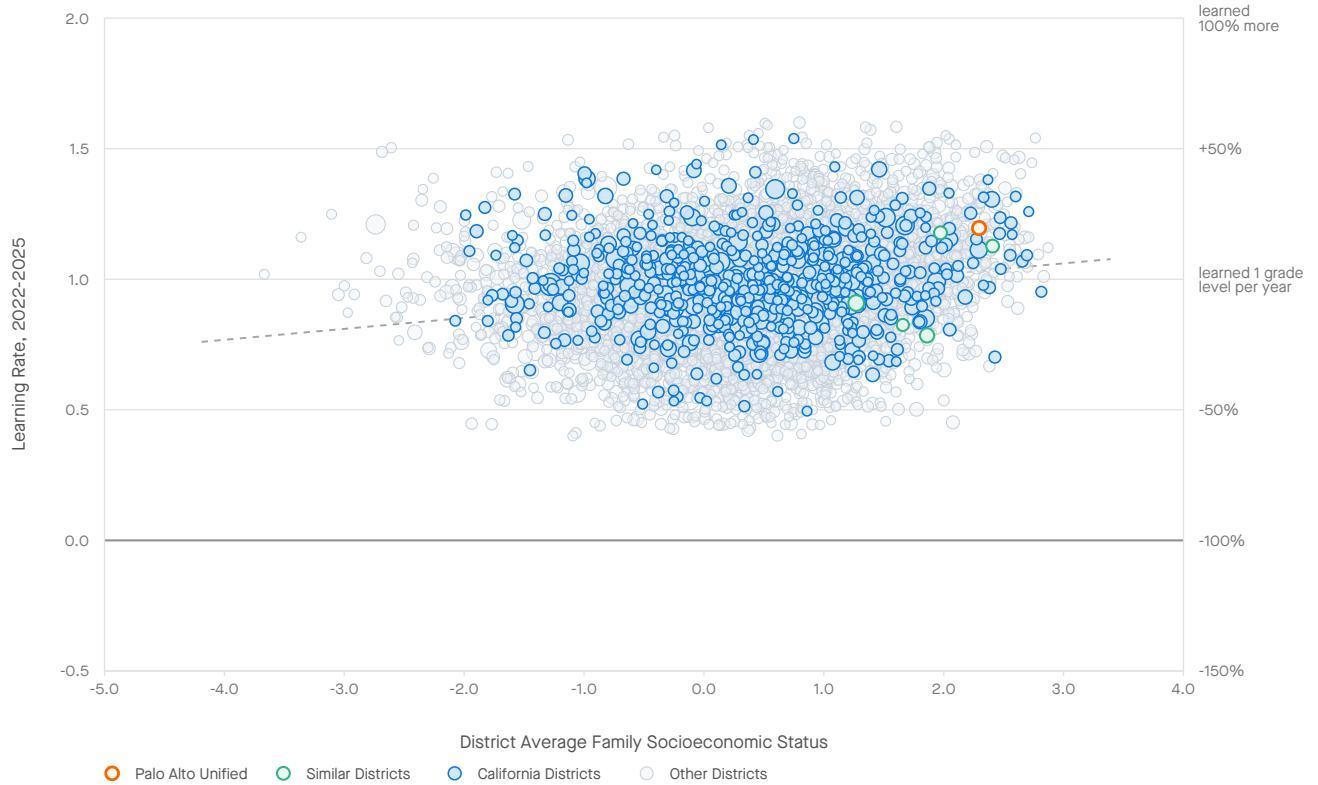


# Palo Alto Unified, California



## Average Grades 3-8 Learning Rates, 2022-2025, by District Socioeconomic Status

Learning rates measure how much students' scores improve as they progress from grade to grade. They are a better indicator of school quality than average test scores, which are influenced by a range of experiences outside of school.



Note: each bubble is a U.S. school district, with size proportional to district enrollment. Districts in California are highlighted. District socioeconomic status is a composite measure of a district's average family income, parental education, poverty rate, SNAP eligibility rate, unemployment rate, and female-headed household rate.

### Learning Rates and Trends, 2022-2025

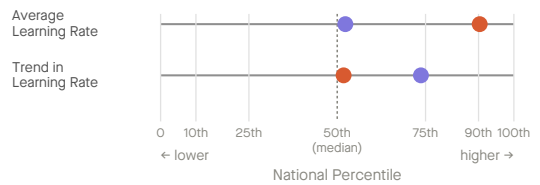
#### ALL STUDENTS

	2022-2025 Learning Rate	2022-2025 Trend in Learning Rates
<b>Palo Alto Unified</b>	1.20	-0.01
<b>Similar Districts Avg.*</b>	0.94	0.03
<b>California</b>	0.98	-0.02

Learning rates are measured in grade levels of skills gained per year and are averaged over math and reading. The national average learning rate is 1.0. For example, the first row above reads: "Students in Palo Alto Unified learned an average of 1.20 grade levels/year during 2022-2025. Learning rates in Palo Alto Unified have been changing at a rate of -0.01 grade levels/year since 2022."

\*Similar districts are the nearest matches within the same state based on socioeconomic status, demographics, and size. Similar districts for Palo Alto Unified are Del Mar Union Elementary, Santa Clara Unified, Moreland, and Torrance Unified.

### Learning Rate Rankings



	Average	Trend
<b>Palo Alto Unified</b>	789 / 8,147 (90th pct)	2,924 / 6,065 (52nd pct)
<b>Similar Districts Avg.</b>	3,887 / 8,147 (52nd pct)	1,596 / 6,065 (74th pct)

Palo Alto Unified ranked higher than 90% of districts nationwide in average learning rates during the 2022-25 school years (789th of 8,147 districts with available data).



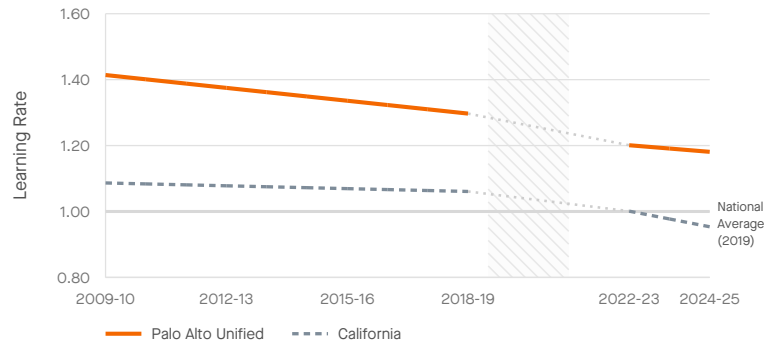
# Palo Alto Unified, California

## Trends in Average Grade 3-8 Learning Rates, 2009-2025, by Student Subgroup

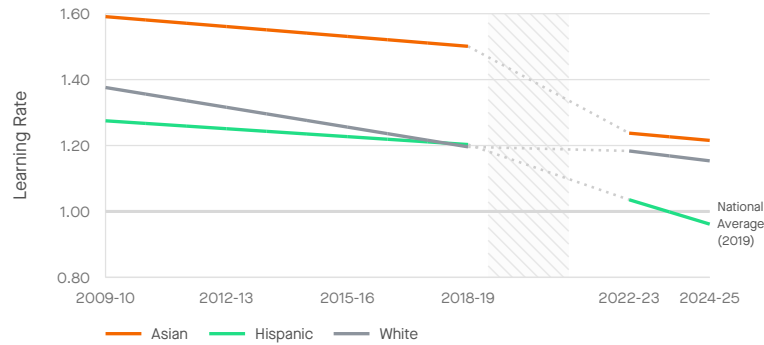


Trends in learning rates measure how annual learning rates change over time. They are a better indicator of changes in school quality than trends in average test scores, which are influenced by a range of experiences outside of school.

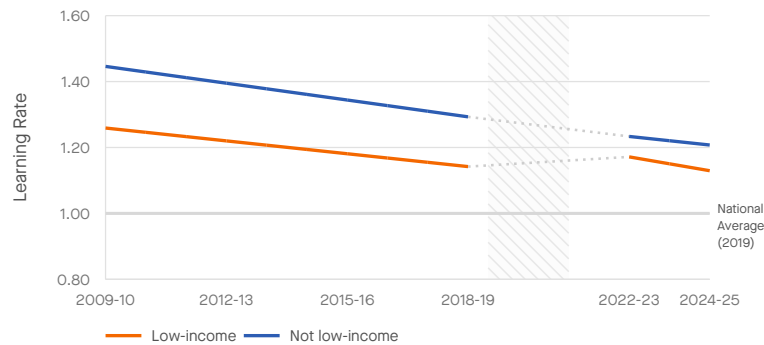
**Trend in Learning Rates (All Students)**



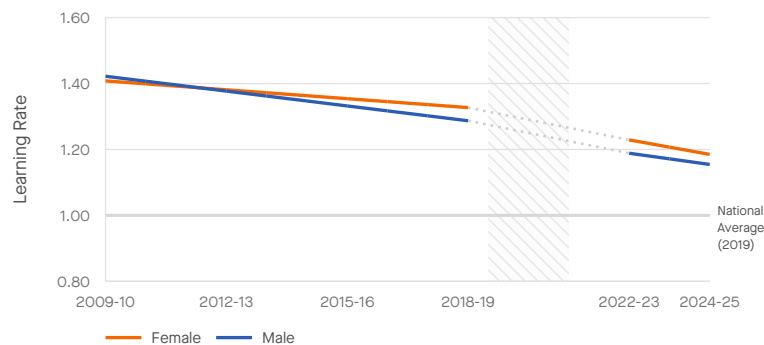
**Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Race/Ethnicity**



**Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Income Level**



**Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Gender**



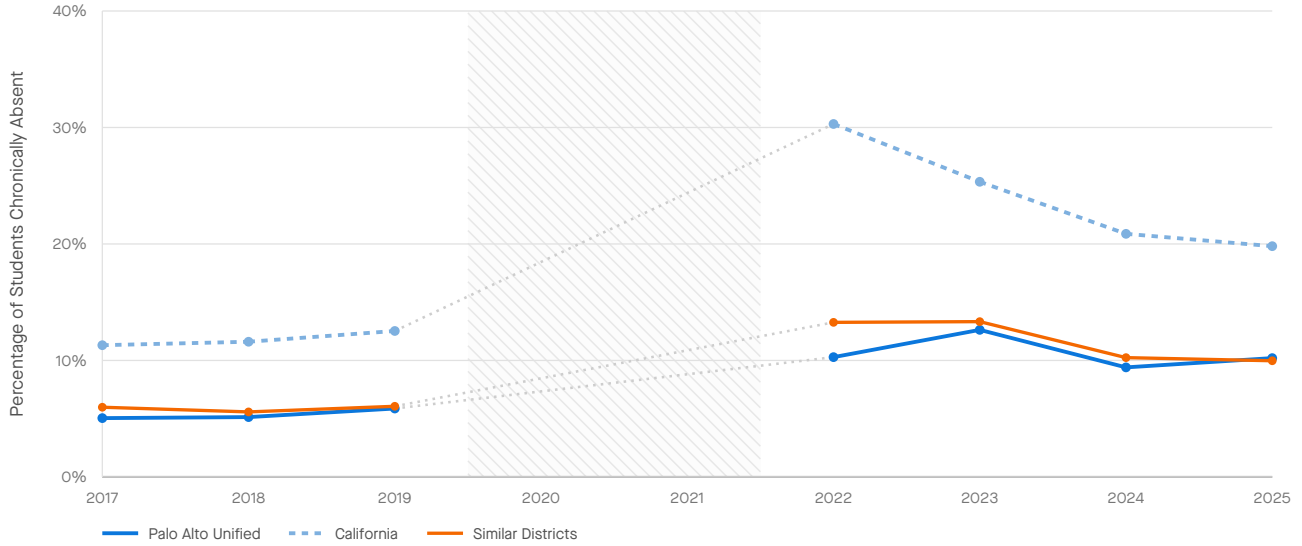
# Palo Alto Unified, California



## Trends in Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism rates indicate the proportion of students who were absent 10% or more of the school year.

### Trends in Chronic Absenteeism



## Trends in Chronic Absenteeism

### ALL STUDENTS

	2017-2019 Avg. Chronic Absenteeism	2022-2025 Avg. Chronic Absenteeism	Change
Palo Alto Unified	5.4	10.6	+5.3
Similar Districts Avg.*	5.9	11.7	+5.8
California	11.8	24.1	+12.3

\*Similar districts are the nearest matches within the same state based on socioeconomic status, demographics, and size. Similar districts for Palo Alto Unified are Del Mar Union Elementary, Union Elementary, Santa Clara Unified, Moreland, and Torrance Unified.

Absenteeism data courtesy of [Nat Malkus, American Enterprise Institute](#).



# Palo Alto Unified, California



Changes in Average Math Scores in California Districts, 2019-2025 and 2022-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

## Change in Math Scores, 2019-2025



Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

○ Largest Districts    ◆ State Average

## Change in Math Scores, 2022-2025



Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

○ Largest Districts    ◆ State Average



# Palo Alto Unified, California



Changes in Average Reading Scores in California Districts, 2019-2025 and 2022-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

## Change in Reading Scores, 2019-2025



Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

○ Largest Districts    ◆ State Average

## Change in Reading Scores, 2022-2025



Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

○ Largest Districts    ◆ State Average



# Palo Alto Unified, California



## Change in Chronic Absenteeism in California Districts, 2019-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

### Change in Chronic Absenteeism, 2019-2025



Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

○ Largest Districts    ◆ State Average





## Notes & Acknowledgments

This report summarizes academic performance in Palo Alto Unified from 2008-09 through 2024-25, using data from the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA). SEDA is a national database of U.S. academic performance produced by the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University. The SEDA data are based on the standardized accountability tests in math and reading language arts (RLA) administered by each state to all public-school students in grades 3-8.

The raw test score data used to construct the SEDA 2022-2025 estimates here were graciously provided to us by Emily Oster and Clare Halloran at the [Education Data Center](#). The raw test score data used to construct the SEDA 2009-2019 estimates are available through the [EDFacts](#) data system at the U.S. Department of Education, and were provided to us by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Detailed NAEP data used to harmonize test scores across states was provided by NCES and the National Assessment Governing Board. Chronic absenteeism data were provided by [Nat Malkus at the American Enterprise Institute](#). Funding to construct and analyze SEDA was provided by the Gates Foundation. Funding for the Education Scorecard was provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Joyce Foundation, Kenneth C. Griffin and Citadel Catalyst. The findings and opinions expressed in our research and reported here are those of the authors alone; they do not represent the views of any of the above organizations.

### Citation:

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