



# Compounded Disadvantage: Intersectional Inequities in Chronic Absenteeism Prevalence and Recovery During the COVID-19 Era

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This study applies an intersectional lens to examine how chronic absenteeism evolved across intersecting dimensions of race, gender, economic disadvantage, disability status, and housing instability before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic using statewide, administrative data from Georgia. Consistent with national evidence, chronic absenteeism roughly doubled from prepandemic levels and has remained elevated through 2023. Critically, pandemic-era increases and subsequent recovery were deeply uneven. Black and Hispanic students, particularly females, and students experiencing homelessness remained substantially above pre-pandemic baselines in 2023 while White students recovered at substantially higher rates. Findings challenge aggregate recovery narratives and underscore that post-pandemic attendance recovery has been stratified in ways that reflect the unequal distribution of structural barriers to consistent school attendance.

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Compounded Disadvantage: Intersectional Inequities in Chronic Absenteeism Prevalence and  
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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author. Jerome Graham is an Assistant Professor of K-12 Educational Administration at Michigan State University. His research evaluates the implementation and effects of educational policies and practices that have the potential to make schools more humanizing for Black children. Jerome's work explores the question, "**How would schooling look differently if it were structured in a way that equitably facilitated the social and emotional learning (SEL) and wellbeing of all—and especially Black—students?**" He anchors this work through interdisciplinary, mixed-method scholarship that highlights three areas that would look radically different if policies and practices nurtured students' wellbeing: school climate, school discipline, and mental health. His research draws attention to these areas by: (1) problematizing, analyzing, and documenting the disparities that often make school a 'site of suffering' for Black students and (2) investigating the implementation and effects of policies and practices offering alternatives to current schooling approaches that would center, improve, and affirm wellbeing.

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**Abstract**

This study applies an intersectional lens to examine how chronic absenteeism evolved across intersecting dimensions of race, gender, economic disadvantage, disability status, and housing instability before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic using statewide, administrative data from Georgia. Consistent with national evidence, chronic absenteeism roughly doubled from pre-pandemic levels and has remained elevated through 2023. Critically, pandemic-era increases and subsequent recovery were deeply uneven. Black and Hispanic students, particularly females, and students experiencing homelessness remained substantially above pre-pandemic baselines in 2023 while White students recovered at substantially higher rates. Findings challenge aggregate recovery narratives and underscore that post-pandemic attendance recovery has been stratified in ways that reflect the unequal distribution of structural barriers to consistent school attendance.

*Keywords:* chronic absenteeism; attendance; intersectionality theory; COVID-19 pandemic

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### Introduction

Rates of chronic absenteeism—missing at least 10% of the school year—have increased dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fuller et al., 2024a; Malkus, 2024a). It is roughly five years since the pandemic began, yet rates of chronic absence remain high, with no signs of returning to pre-pandemic norms (Graham, 2026; Malkus, 2024b). Although the increase in chronic absenteeism has affected students across all racial backgrounds, states, and school types (Dee, 2024; Kirksey, 2025), there are pressing questions about whether students occupying particular identities have been disproportionately burdened by the post-pandemic rise in chronic absenteeism and whether the modest recovery underway is reaching students equally (Graham, 2026).

Understanding these persistent increases, the disparities embedded within them, and their uneven recovery trajectories is important because of the negative effects of chronic absenteeism (Aucejo & Romano, 2016; Gershenson et al., 2017; Gottfried, 2019; Gottfried & Ansari, 2022; Smerillo et al., 2018) and that it is undermining the academic recovery efforts designed to address COVID-19 learning loss (Dee, 2024; Dewey et al., 2024; Swiderski et al., 2025).

Research has consistently documented that students who are marginalized along racial, economic, and (dis)ability lines miss school at higher rates than their more advantaged peers (Gee, 2018; Graham, 2026). These disparities do not reflect deficits concentrated among certain groups but are a measurable consequence of how structural inequality shapes the conditions under which students can or cannot attend school regularly (Graham et al., 2025). Transportation barriers, housing instability, health challenges, economic precarity, and inadequate school supports are all well-documented contributors to chronic absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Childs & Lofton, 2021; Gottfried & Gee, 2017), and are increasingly framed as factors within ecological systems that shape whether and how often students attend school (Childs & Scanlon, 2024; Lenhoff & Singer, 2024; Singer et al., 2021). These barriers are systematically concentrated among students with

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marginalized social positions, or locations within hierarchically organized systems of race, class, gender, and ability that distribute resources and barriers inequitably (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). Framing race, poverty, and disability as “risk factors” for absence, rather than as markers of students’ social positions within oppressive systems, risks perpetuating what Edwards et al. (2023) and Graham et al. (2025) critique as deficit logics about marginalized students and their families that too often undergird attendance discourse, theory, and policy.

This critical orientation, as applied in attendance research, offers an important tool for countering these deficit orientations by treating (especially quantitative) data not as neutral but as a tool for exposing how structural inequality operates and interrogating how the collection, analysis, and interpretation of attendance data reflects assumptions about race and social position that shape what stories get told and whose experiences get centered (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018). Such orientations also push back against the tendency for absenteeism research to only examine attendance disparities along one dimension of identity at a time, treating students’ background characteristics as discrete and largely independent influences on whether, how, and why students miss school. This single-axis framing obscures how dimensions of marginalization interact, as systems of oppression operate such that students’ social positions are intertwined and compound in ways that produce forms of disadvantage no single-category analysis can fully capture (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality theory offers a different and important critical tool attendance researchers can leverage to better account for how inequities compound across multiple axes of identity (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). This framing pushes the field beyond analyses that privilege single categories (Carbado et al., 2013; Clarke & McCall, 2013) in favor of approaches that surface the relationships between race, class, gender, disability, and other dimensions of students’ lives (Carbado et al., 2013; Clarke & McCall, 2013). Applying this intersectional lens is also salient for understanding whether

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absenteeism rates are recovering equitably from pandemic-era peaks, as single-axis analyses cannot tell us whether students at the intersections of multiple forms of structural disadvantage are benefiting from any reported declines in post pandemic rates of chronic absence—however marginal they may be (Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024b). Despite these affordances and the steps researchers have taken to move the field beyond deficit orientations about attendance, intersectional theories and analyses remain largely absent in absenteeism research and discourse with few exceptions (e.g., Burns et al., 2021; Losen et al., 2021).

This study offers these contributions using a ten-year panel of statewide administrative data from Georgia, spanning the 2014-15 through 2023-24 school years, which includes student-level attendance records linked to demographic characteristics and program participation indicators for all middle and high school students in the state. Consistent with findings from other states (Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2025), chronic absenteeism in Georgia peaked in 2021-22 at 25%, roughly double the pre-pandemic rate of 13% in 2018-19, but has remained elevated well above pre-pandemic levels. Applying an intersectional lens, we examine how chronic absenteeism prevalence and post-pandemic recovery varied before (prior to 2019-20), during (2020-21), and after (2021-22 through 2023-24) the pandemic at the intersections of race and 1) gender, 2) disability status, 3) free and reduced-price lunch eligibility, and 4) homelessness. We center these dimensions because pre-pandemic research documents that structural barriers to attendance are most heavily concentrated among students who occupy these social positions (Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018; Gee, 2018, 2024; Klein, 2020). Specifically, our analysis is informed by the following research questions:

1. How has the prevalence of chronic absenteeism varied across students' intersecting racial, gender, economic, disability, and housing identities before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

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2. To what extent have pandemic-era increases in chronic absenteeism and subsequent recovery disproportionately affected students occupying multiply marginalized social positions?

In what follows, we synthesize the extant literature on chronic absenteeism with a critical eye toward how researchers leverage critical and intersectional analyses in their scholarship on pandemic-era increases and recovery. We then describe intersectionality as a theoretical approach. Afterwards, we discuss the data and methods used in this study. Next, we present our findings before closing with a discussion of implications for research, policy, and practice.

### **Literature review**

#### **Chronic Absenteeism: Pre- and Post-Pandemic Empirical Patterns by Student Subgroups**

Chronic absenteeism is among the most consequential indicators of educational inequality, reflecting not only whether students attend school regularly but also whether they can consistently access the academic, social, and institutional supports schools provide. A large body of research links chronic absenteeism to declines in academic achievement, high school graduation, college enrollment, school engagement, and socioemotional development (Gottfried, 2014; Santibáñez & Guarino, 2021; Smerillo et al., 2018). These consequences extend beyond individual students, as absenteeism can also undermine classroom learning conditions and broader school functioning (Gottfried, 2019). Importantly, chronic absenteeism does not emerge randomly across students or schools. Attendance barriers are systematically concentrated among students navigating forms of structural disadvantage, including economic precarity, housing instability, inadequate healthcare access, transportation barriers, school mobility, and exclusionary school conditions (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Childs & Lofton, 2021; Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Singer et al., 2021; Singer, 2025). Chronic absenteeism therefore should be understood not simply as an individual behavior, but as a manifestation of how structural inequality shapes students' access to schooling.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this access substantially by producing historically unprecedented increases in chronic absenteeism. National rates nearly doubled after the pandemic, rising from roughly 16% before COVID-19 to nearly 30% in 2021–22, with many states continuing to report rates well above pre-pandemic levels even after modest declines (Dee, 2024; Malkus, 2024). State-level and multi-state analyses reinforce this pattern. In Arizona, chronic absenteeism peaked at 34% in 2021–22 and declined by five percentage points (PPs) in 2022–23, but remained more than twice as high as pre-pandemic levels (Barrat et al., 2025). Drawing on longitudinal student-level data from North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia, Kirksey (2025) similarly shows that the pandemic shifted the full distribution of absences upward, with increases not limited to students crossing the chronic absenteeism threshold. Together, this work suggests that the pandemic did not simply produce a temporary attendance shock but contributed to a broader and more persistent reorganization of student attendance patterns.

Research has established that chronic absenteeism, including pandemic-era spikes, are deeply stratified by students' background characteristics, with structural barriers to attendance concentrated among students who experience overlapping forms of marginalization. Before the pandemic, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and low-income students already experienced disproportionately high rates of chronic absenteeism across states and grade levels (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Gee, 2018; Gottfried, 2014). Post-pandemic research suggests these disparities persisted or widened. Nationally, chronic absenteeism in 2021-22 reached 39% among Black students and 36% among Hispanic students, compared to 24% among White students and 16% among Asian students (Malkus, 2025). Polikoff and Pardo (2025) show that mobile followed by low-income students experienced some of the steepest increases in absenteeism across Virginia and North Carolina, while Barrat et al. (2025) document that schools serving larger shares of economically disadvantaged students and students of color continued to experience elevated chronic absence even after statewide rates began to decline.

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These patterns reflect more than demographic correlates of absence. Poverty is itself racialized through historical and ongoing inequalities in housing, labor markets, healthcare access, and school funding, meaning that racial attendance disparities are often inseparable from broader patterns of concentrated economic disadvantage and unequal access to the conditions that make regular attendance possible (Childs & Lofton, 2021; Gottfried & Gee, 2017).

Students with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness illustrate this compounding especially clearly. Students with disabilities are substantially more likely to be chronically absent than their nondisabled peers (Gee, 2024; Losen et al., 2021). Students experiencing homelessness also face acute attendance barriers, including school mobility, lack of transportation, exposure to trauma, and the daily instability of not having secure housing (Burns et al., 2021; Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018). In Michigan, 40% of homeless students were chronically absent compared to 16% of all students (Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018). Gender has received comparatively less attention, though, prior to the pandemic, a few studies documented modest and inconsistent gender gaps, with some finding slightly higher absenteeism among male students and others finding near parity (Dee, 2024; Gee, 2018).

### **Hidden in Plain Sight: The Case for Intersectionality in Absenteeism Research**

Due to the tendency to center single-axis analyses, the field still knows relatively little about how overlapping forms of marginalization shape the severity, persistence, and recovery of post-pandemic attendance disruptions. Existing evidence already hints at how these dimensions compound, even when studies do not center intersectional frames. Losen et al. (2021), in their California analysis, found that chronic absenteeism increased systematically as markers of disadvantage accumulated. Among African American high school students, absenteeism rates were 24% for students without disabilities, 35% for students with disabilities, 37% for low-income students with disabilities, and 54% for homeless students with disabilities. For Latinx students, the

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corresponding rates were 17%, 27%, 28%, and 41%. American Indian or Alaska Native students with disabilities experiencing homelessness had a rate of 59%, while Asian students without disabilities had a rate of 5% — a 54 PP range visible only when race, disability, poverty, and homelessness are examined jointly. Erb-Downward and Watt (2018) similarly document that economically disadvantaged and homeless students together comprised just under half of Michigan's enrollment but represented three-quarters of chronically absent students.

The question of whether post-pandemic absenteeism is recovering has received growing attention, but existing recovery analyses share the same single-axis limitation that characterizes the broader literature. Malkus (2024) documents that chronic absenteeism rates improved in 2023 but remained 75% higher than the pre-pandemic baseline, with the largest persistent increases concentrated in high-poverty and low-achieving districts. DiMarco (2026) further documents that while recovery since the 2021-22 peak has been somewhat stronger for Black and Hispanic students in absolute terms, these improvements have not offset their larger initial increases. Compared to White students, who remain about 5.5 PPs above their pre-pandemic baseline, Black and Hispanic students remain nearly 9 and 10 points above respectively. These contributions are important, but they examine race, income, and other dimensions of disadvantage in parallel rather than at their intersections. As such, single-axis recovery analyses keep hidden in plain sight the compounded burden of multiply marginalized students, disparities that once surfaced intersectionally reveal far more alarming patterns than aggregate trends suggest and that should demand a more targeted and urgent policy response. In what follows, we briefly define intersectionality and describe what centering it as both a theoretical framework and an analytic orientation affords for understanding post-pandemic attendance disparities beyond what single-axes research has brought forth.

### **Defining and Applying Intersectionality Theory**

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Developed by Kimberley Crenshaw as a theory undergirding the experiences of Black women, intersectionality theory has been increasingly applied to education policy and equity topics (Cooper et al., 2022; Welsh, 2024). Kimberlee Crenshaw (1989, 1991) coined intersectionality as a framework to elucidate how Black women experienced compounded disadvantages from forms of both racial and gender discrimination. A primary purpose of this framing was to shift conceptualizations of inequity away from a single-axis understanding, instead interrogating how race intersects with other marginalized identities, such as gender, disability, and sexual orientation. Intersectional lenses were particularly important in the context of the broader feminism movement, which Black feminist scholars highlighted excluded women of color despite their shared struggles with White women in the context of workplace discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus, this conceptualization illuminates multiple forms of marginalization reflects, reinforces, and creates systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination (Delgado, 2010; Gillborn, 2015).

Scholars have used intersectionality to accentuate how Black girls are perceived as hypersexualized beings, which shapes their experiences of sexual harassment at school (Epstein et al., 2017; Harris & Kruger, 2020; Morris, 2016; Onyeka-Crawford et al., 2017). Several other scholars have found that both Black boys (Lewis et al. 2010; McFadden & Marsh, 1992; Skiba et al., 2002) and Black girls are overly criminalized and punished in schools (Apugo & Castro, 2023; Blake et al., 2011; Carter-Andrews et al., 2019). We expand this intersectional focus to the study of chronic absenteeism, and explore how race intersects with multiple forms identities to better understand the specific students experiencing the most significant pandemic-era schooling disruptions.

As referenced above, intersectionality has been scarcely applied to chronic absenteeism (Losen et al., 2021). Although significant attention has been paid to the multiple ecological levels at which factors drive absenteeism through Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Singer et al., 2021), less attention has been paid to intersectionality theory. Some studies have applied related critical

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orientations, examining how language, income, sexual orientation, and gender identity shape attendance and academic performance (Gower et al., 2025; Kyere et al., 2023). Gower et al. (2025), applying minority stress theory and intersectionality to data from Minnesota and California, found that the highest prevalence of frequent absences occurred among Latina/x/o, Black, multiracial, and American Indian students who were also sexually diverse or targets of bias-based bullying, with experiences of bullying especially predictive of safety-related absences among transgender and gender diverse youth. Russell et al. (2024) similarly document that Black male students are especially prone to discipline-related absenteeism. These studies demonstrate that intersectional analyses reveal patterns in attendance data that single-axis comparisons cannot surface, and they point to the need for more work of this kind in the post-pandemic context.

Similar to scholarship in other domains, we leverage intersectionality both analytically and dispositionally to better understand how interlocking educational injustices shape individual experiences and outcomes (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Natapoff, 1995; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2016). Rather than treating race, gender, disability, poverty, and homelessness as independent risk factors, we understand them as markers of students' social positions within hierarchically organized systems that distribute barriers to attendance unequally. Methodologically, this means examining how absenteeism evolved across joint categories rather than parallel subgroups, attending to how compounded disadvantage shaped the severity and persistence of pandemic-era attendance disruptions. Dispositionally, it means interpreting the patterns we find not as properties of student groups but as evidence of how structural inequality operates through and across multiple dimensions of students' lives, including the material consequences of oppression for multiply marginalized groups and the erasure of individuals' experiences at the intersections of multiple social identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Our intersectional lense shapes what we look for in the data and how we interpret

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what we find, allowing us to surface, counter, and add nuance to majoritarian narratives about attendance and recovery that have been underexplored in extant scholarship.

### **Data: Chronic Absenteeism in Georgia**

Our analyses draw on longitudinal administrative data provided by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), which maintain annual student enrollment, attendance, demographic, and program participation records for all public-school students in the state. The analytic panel spans the 2014–15 through 2023–24, school years however, we exclude 2019–20 from our primary analyses due to mid-year COVID-19 school closures, which created inconsistent attendance reporting practices across districts. This exclusion is consistent with other pandemic-era absenteeism research (Dee, 2024; Malkus, 2024) and ensures our pre-pandemic baseline (2013-14 through 2018-19) and post-pandemic comparison periods (2020-21 to 2022-23) reflect full years of in-person instruction with comparable attendance tracking. Further, our analytic sample is restricted to middle and high school students enrolled in traditional public schools with valid attendance records. After applying these restrictions, the final dataset includes approximately 10.5 million observations.

The primary source of data we leverage for the present study are attendance data provided by GOSA. The attendance files include, for each student in each year, the number of days present and the number of days absent. Our measure of chronic absence captures the total number of days missed each year, whether excused or unexcused. Because the total number of possible days varies across districts and years, we standardize attendance measurement across the panel by capping the number of possible days at 180 for all students and all years. We classify a student as chronically absent when their number of absences exceeds 10% of the total possible days (18 days). These attendance records are linked to demographic files, which provide information on student

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race/ethnicity (Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other), gender, disability status, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness status. We also have school and grade IDs for each student.

Georgia is a large and diverse state, operating approximately 1000 middle and high schools serving nearly 1 million students annually. As shown in Table 1, in 2018-19, 37% of secondary school students identified as Black, 14% as Hispanic, 41% as White, 8% as Other races. Approximately 47% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 12 % had documented disabilities, and 2% were classified as homelessness at some point during the school year. These trends were generally consistent across the pandemic period, though in the post-period, the percentage of Hispanic students increased to 18.5%, while the percentage of White students decreased to 36%. Georgia has more than double (39%) the national average (15%) of Black students in its middle and high schools.

Table 1 provides additional context regarding the demographic composition and absenteeism patterns of the analytic sample across pandemic periods. Across all students, chronic absenteeism increased substantially from 14% pre-pandemic to 24% during the pandemic and 26% in the post-pandemic period, while average days absent rose from about 9 days to 13 days. Racial differences in absenteeism were already evident prior to the pandemic and widened over time. Black and Hispanic students consistently exhibited the highest rates of chronic absenteeism across all periods, reaching 29% and 28% post-pandemic, respectively, compared to 23% for White students and 18% for students in the Other race category. Black and Hispanic students also experienced higher rates of concentrated disadvantage across multiple dimensions. For example, both groups had substantially higher rates of FRPL eligibility than White students throughout the panel, with nearly 58% of Black students and roughly 62% of Hispanic students identified as FRPL-eligible in the post-pandemic period, compared to approximately 30% of White students. Black students also exhibited the highest rates of homelessness and disability identification across most periods. These

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descriptive patterns reinforce the importance of examining chronic absenteeism through an intersectional lens, as the groups experiencing the highest absenteeism rates were also those disproportionately exposed to multiple forms of structural disadvantage simultaneously.

To describe trends over time, we compute annual averages of chronic absenteeism by student subgroup, producing the time-series figures used throughout the findings. Given that we seek to examine intersectional inequities, we generate joint categories that combine race with gender, disability, FRPL, or homelessness (i.e., Black female students, Hispanic students with disabilities, or White students experiencing homelessness). These intersectional groups allow us to examine how compounded disadvantage shapes absenteeism trajectories before, during, and after the pandemic.

### **Analytic Approach**

Our analyses unfold in three layers. First, we document year-to-year trends in the percentage of chronically absent students by student characteristics, followed by trends for their intersectional identities. For these student-level analyses, we compute annual means over time, analyzing trends for changes across the pre-, during-, and post-pandemic periods. We visualize these trends using line graphs showing how absenteeism evolved over time for each demographic group. In some analyses, we report Black, Hispanic, Asian, White, Asian, and “Other” racial-ethnic groups, but in others, we combine Asian students with students identifying as Other race. We make this choice because Asian students comprise roughly 3% of Georgia's middle and high school population. Thus, when constructing intersectional groups, the sample sizes become quite small (i.e., for Asian students identified as homeless), which makes our takeaways incredibly sensitive to even small changes in enrollment patterns. Thus, while we understand that “otherizing” any student group and combining students with differing schooling experiences are problematic, our analytic decisions seek to ensure that we have sufficient sample sizes for stable estimates within intersectional categories while

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maintaining distinct categories for the largest racial/ethnic groups (*specific estimates for each intersectional group are available upon request*).

To complement the descriptive trends, we then estimate period-specific linear probability models predicting whether a student was chronically absent. These models assess whether the broad subgroup differences observed descriptively remain evident and are statistically significant when key student characteristics are included simultaneously. We estimate separate models for the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods. Each model adjusts for race/ethnicity, gender, FRPL eligibility, disability status, homelessness, and grade level, and the accompanying coefficients are multiplied by 100 to present adjusted PP differences in chronic absenteeism. Accounting for grade level is important considering Figure 1, which shows that chronic absenteeism varies considerably across grade levels. Pre-pandemic rates rose steadily from 8% in Grade 6 to 19% in Grade 12. All grades experienced higher rates during the pandemic, and the post-pandemic period marks the highest levels for every grade, from 18% in Grade 6 to 33% in Grade 12. Grade 12 shows the largest overall increase from pre- to post-pandemic (14 PPs). Thus, we include grade fixed effects, and our model is expressed as:

$$CA_{isgt}^p = \alpha_p + \beta_{1p}Female_{isgt} + \beta_{2p}FRPL_{isgt} + \beta_{3p}SWD_{isgt} + \beta_{4p}Homeless_{isgt} \\ + \beta_{5p}Black_{isgt} + \beta_{6p}Hispanic_{isgt} + \beta_{7p}Asian_{isgt} + \beta_{8p}OtherRace_{isgt} + \lambda_{gp} \\ + \varepsilon_{isgt}$$

where  $CA_{isgt}^p$  is an indicator for whether student  $i$  in school  $s$ , grade  $g$ , and year  $t$  was chronically absent during period  $p$ . The term  $\lambda_{gp}$  represents grade fixed effects estimated separately within each period. White students, male students, students not eligible for FRPL, students without disabilities, and housed students serve as the reference groups. The resulting coefficients represent adjusted PP differences in chronic absenteeism relative to each reference group within each pandemic period. All models include robust standard errors clustered at the school level.

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In addition to looking at the descriptive trends for addressing Research Question 2, to more directly assess whether post-pandemic recovery differed across intersectional student groups, we supplement the annual trend figures with a set of descriptive recovery metrics and statistical tests of differential change. For each intersectional group, we use 2018 as the pre-pandemic baseline, 2021 as the pandemic-era high point, and 2023 as the most recent year in the panel. We calculate three descriptive quantities: the increase in chronic absenteeism from 2018 to 2021, the decline from 2021 to 2023, and the remaining elevation above the 2018 baseline in 2023. Specifically, we choose 2021 as the central year in these analyses because rates were highest across all groups in that year and 2023 is the last year for which we have data. We also calculate the percentage of the 2018-to-2021 increase that had been recovered by 2023, defined as  $(Rate_{2021} - Rate_{2023}) / (Rate_{2021} - Rate_{2018}) \times 100$ . A value of 100 indicates that a group returned to its 2018 baseline, while a value of 0 indicates no recovery from its 2021 level. Supplemental analyses use the full pre-pandemic period as the baseline (the average and median across all pre-pandemic years) as a specification check, and these estimates are qualitatively similar (*results available upon request*).

We then estimate saturated group-by-year linear probability models for each intersectional comparison: race by gender, race by disability status, race by FRPL eligibility, and race by housing status. These models use observations from 2018, 2021, and 2023 and include indicators for intersectional group, year, group-by-year interactions, and grade fixed effects as shown below:

$$CA_{isgt} = \alpha + \sum_j \theta_j G_{ij} + \sum_t \lambda_t Y_t + \sum_j \sum_t \delta_{jt} (G_{ij} \times Y_t) + \gamma_g + \varepsilon_{isgt}$$

where  $CA_{isgt}$  is an indicator for whether student  $i$  in school  $s$ , grade  $g$ , and year  $t$  was chronically absent.  $G_{ij}$  represents membership in intersectional group  $j$ ,  $Y_t$  includes indicators for 2021 and 2023, with 2018 as the reference year, and  $\gamma_g$  represents grade fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the school level to account for the nesting of students within schools. The

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group-by-2021 interaction estimates whether a group’s increase from 2018 to 2021 differed from the reference group’s increase. The group-by-2023 interaction estimates whether a group remained farther above its 2018 baseline in 2023 than the reference group. Finally, we calculate less recovery than the reference group as  $\delta_{j2023} - \delta_{j2021}$ , so positive values indicate that the group recovered less from 2021 to 2023 than the reference group. Reference groups are White male students, White general education students, White non-FRPL students, and White housed students, respectively.

### Limitations

There are several potential limitations in this study. First, the analysis is descriptive and does not identify causal effects. As such, we are unable to make inferences about to what extent the pandemic caused changes in the patterns we observe. Further, administrative data indicators — particularly FRPL eligibility, disability status, and homelessness—depend on identification and reporting practices that vary across schools and are known to undercount the populations they intend to capture (Dhaliwal et al., 2026; Singer, 2025). Another potential limitation is that our focus on middle and high school students in one state potentially limits generalizability to elementary students and other states with different demographic compositions, policy contexts, or attendance-reporting practices. Even with these limitations, the longitudinal statewide data provide a rare opportunity to examine how chronic absenteeism and recovery unfolded across intersectional student groups over a decade, and the alignment of our Georgia findings with national evidence (Malkus, 2024) and multi-state analyses (Barrat et al., 2025; DiMarco, 2026; Kirksey, 2025; Polikoff & Pardo, 2025) provides confidence in their broader relevance.

Finally, one might also be concerned that the recovery differentials we document are driven by compositional change across periods rather than genuine differences in attendance trajectories—for instance, if students with unstable housing, high mobility, or disrupted enrollment disproportionately exit the sample between 2018 and 2023, the groups we observe in later years may

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not be comparable to those observed at baseline. We investigated this concern by re-estimating the saturated group-by-year models on a consistent panel restricted to students observed in all three anchor years. This approach is not well-suited to address the concern, however, because the students most likely to exit the sample are precisely the students whose limited recovery is central to our findings. Conditioning on consistent enrollment does not eliminate compositional bias so much as it conditions away the mechanism producing the disparities we observe. When we estimated the consistent panel models, several key recovery differentials were attenuated or reversed in sign for Black and Hispanic students, consistent with the interpretation that the consistent panel retains more stable students within these groups while excluding the most structurally vulnerable. We therefore do not report these estimates in the main text, as the consistent panel produces a selected sample that understates the true inequity in recovery, but results are available upon request.

### Findings

**Research Question 1: How has the prevalence of chronic absenteeism varied across students' intersecting racial, gender, economic, disability, and housing identities before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic?**

We begin by documenting chronic absenteeism prevalence across all middle and high school students throughout the panel. As Figure 2 shows, Hispanic students consistently exhibited the highest chronic absenteeism rates throughout the pre-pandemic period at approximately 15–16%, followed by Black students at 13–14%, White students at 10–11%, and Asian students around 5%. These racial disparities widened substantially in the post-pandemic period. Hispanic students' rates rose to approximately 30% in 2020 and remained at these levels through 2023, while Black students' rates increased to 26–28% and remained largely stable. White students peaked at 24–25% in 2021 but showed notable declines by 2023 to approximately 20%. We find that rates declined for all

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students in 2019, likely reflecting mid-year school closures and inconsistent attendance tracking in spring 2020, confirming our decision to exclude this year from primary analyses.

Figure 3 shows that chronic absenteeism increased sharply across all student groups after the onset of the pandemic, but the magnitude and persistence of those increases varied substantially by student characteristics. Gender differences were relatively small, with male and female students moving in largely parallel patterns. In contrast, much larger and more persistent gaps appear by FRPL eligibility, disability status, and homelessness. Students experiencing homelessness had chronic absenteeism rates already far above housed students before the pandemic, rising to roughly half of all homeless students in the post-pandemic period. Across panels, the figure reinforces two broad themes: the pandemic-era increase was widespread, but recovery has been uneven, with students already facing economic, disability-related, and housing-related vulnerabilities continuing to experience the highest rates.

Figure 4 presents adjusted PP differences from period-specific linear probability models that estimate each group's association with chronic absenteeism net of all other characteristics. Students experiencing homelessness had the largest adjusted differences across all periods, approximately 21 PPs more likely than housed students to be chronically absent before the pandemic, increasing to roughly 23–24 points during and after. Rather than interpreting homelessness as a cause of absenteeism, we understand this pattern as evidence that students experiencing housing instability are disproportionately exposed to the structural barriers that make regular attendance difficult. FRPL eligibility and disability status remained associated with higher chronic absenteeism in all periods, with the FRPL difference largest in the post-pandemic period at 8.4 PPs. Gender differences were small by comparison, but female students became significantly more likely to be chronically absent in the post-pandemic period.

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Notably, Black and Hispanic students showed little difference from White students before the pandemic, suggesting that much of the pre-pandemic raw difference was intertwined with other measured forms of structural disadvantage. During and after the pandemic, however, racial differences became more pronounced. Black students were 5.4 PPs more likely than otherwise similar White students to be chronically absent during the pandemic and 3.4 points more likely post-pandemic, while Hispanic students shifted from a small negative difference before the pandemic to positive differences of 3.1 and 2.6 points during and after. These estimates reinforce the descriptive findings by showing that students positioned within multiple systems of disadvantage continued to experience elevated absenteeism even when characteristics were modeled simultaneously.

**Intersectional Patterns: Race and Gender.** Examining students at the intersection of race and gender reveals patterns masked in the aggregate trends. Figure 5 shows that Hispanic female students showed the steepest increases of any group, rising from approximately 16% chronically absent in 2018 to 30–31% in 2020. Hispanic male students also experienced substantial increases, reaching approximately 29%, but remained consistently below Hispanic females in the post-pandemic period—a reversal from pre-pandemic patterns when Hispanic males had slightly higher rates. Black students showed similarly large increases, with Black female students reaching 27–28% and Black male students 26–27%. White students showed more modest increases, with White females reaching approximately 25–26% and White males 23–24%, maintaining consistent patterns across the period with females slightly higher throughout.

The shift in overall gender patterns—females becoming more chronically absent than males—appears driven primarily by Hispanic and Black female students, whose rates exceeded those of their male counterparts by approximately 1–2 PPs post-2020 despite having been lower pre-2020. White females consistently exceeded White males by 2–3 PPs throughout the entire period. These patterns suggest that the experiences of female students varied considerably across racial groups.

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Recovery from 2021 to 2023 also varied substantially by race, with White students declining approximately 4–5 PPs from their peaks while Black and Hispanic students showed little to no decline. This differential recovery is examined systematically under Research Question 2.

**Disability Status and Intersectional Disadvantage.** Students with disabilities (SWD) exhibited substantially higher rates than their general education peers across all racial groups. In 2018, the disability gap ranged from 3–7 PPs across racial groups (see Figure 6). Hispanic and White students with disabilities showed rates of 19%, compared to 16% and 13% for their general education counterparts, while Black students with disabilities had rates of 20% compared to 14% for Black general education students. At the pandemic peak, Hispanic SWD reached 33% while Black and White SWD reached 32% and 30%, respectively. The gap between SWD and general education students varied by race: 6, 5, and 3 PPs for White, Black, and Hispanic students, respectively. The compressed gap for Hispanic students is notable, suggesting that general education Hispanic students faced challenges approaching those of students with disabilities in other racial groups, pointing to compounded disadvantage regardless of disability status. Recovery patterns reinforced the racial disparities documented earlier, with Hispanic and Black SWD showing minimal recovery through 2023 while White SWD declined more substantially. By 2023, the gap between Hispanic students with disabilities (32%) and White general education students (19%) had widened to 13 PPs from a pre-pandemic difference of 7 PPs.

**Poverty Status and Racial Stratification.** Next, Figure 7 shows that in 2018, FRPL-eligible students had higher rates of chronic absence than their non-FRPL peers for every racial group, but the magnitudes differed dramatically. White FRPL-eligible students had rates of 22% compared to 10% for White non-FRPL students, a 12 PP gap. Black FRPL students had rates of 17% compared to 13% for Black non-FRPL students, while Hispanic students had only a 1 PP difference. After the pandemic, poverty-based disparities widened considerably, particularly for White students. White

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FRPL-eligible students reached 39%—the highest rate of any FRPL subgroup—while Black and Hispanic FRPL students reached 34% and 31%, respectively.

By 2023, FRPL students across racial groups converged at elevated rates, with White, Hispanic, and Black FRPL students all showing rates of approximately 29–30%. However, among non-FRPL students, substantial racial disparities persisted: Hispanic non-FRPL students (26%) had rates 12 PPs higher than White non-FRPL students (14%) and 7 PPs higher than Black non-FRPL students (19%). This pattern suggests that race continued to structure attendance outcomes in ways that income alone cannot explain. Differential recovery across racial FRPL groups is examined in the following section.

**Housing Instability and Extreme Vulnerability.** Students experiencing homelessness exhibited the highest chronic absenteeism rates of all students, with pre-pandemic rates ranging from 35–43% across racial groups — levels that exceeded the post-pandemic peaks for many other intersectional categories. As shown in Figure 8, White students experiencing homelessness had the highest pre-pandemic rates (43%) compared to 13% for White housed students, a 30 PP gap. Black homeless students had a 37% rate compared to 14% for Black housed students, and the gap for Hispanic students, while smaller, remained substantial at 19 PPs.

Between 2019 and 2021, White and Black homeless students peaked at 57% and 54%, meaning over half of students in these groups missed at least 10% of the school year. Recovery from these peaks remained elusive across racial groups. Black homeless students declined minimally from 54% to 53%, maintaining rates above 50% three years after initial disruptions. White homeless students declined from 57% to 48%, the largest absolute decline among homeless subgroups, yet nearly half remained chronically absent. By 2023, homelessness gaps remained 27–28 PPs for Black and White students and 15 PPs for Hispanic students — evidence that housing instability creates barriers to attendance that re-engagement strategies are not yet adequately reaching.

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**Research Question 2: To what extent have pandemic-era increases in chronic absenteeism and subsequent recovery disproportionately affected students occupying multiply marginalized social positions?**

Having established which intersectional groups had the highest levels of chronic absenteeism, we now examine whether those groups also experienced differential recovery. High post-pandemic rates may reflect both higher pre-pandemic baselines and limited declines after the 2021 peak, and these dimensions require separate assessment. Table 2 summarizes recovery across intersectional groups using three metrics: the pandemic-era increase from 2018 to 2021, the decline from 2021 to 2023, and the remaining elevation above the 2018 baseline in 2023. These metrics allow us to distinguish between groups that were already disproportionately absent before the pandemic, groups that experienced larger pandemic-era increases, and groups for whom elevated absenteeism persisted after the peak. This distinction is important because the descriptive patterns suggest that the pandemic-era rise was widespread across groups, whereas the return toward pre-pandemic attendance levels was more uneven across racialized and social-position groups. Because percentage recovery can obscure groups that remain at very high absolute levels, we interpret it alongside remaining elevation throughout.

Across race and gender, the recovery gap between White and Black and Hispanic students is striking. White male and White female students recovered 47.7% and 42.0% of their 2018-to-2021 increases, remaining 5.4 and 7.0 PPs above baseline in 2023. Black female students recovered only 4.7% of their increase and remained 12.3 PPs above baseline, while Hispanic female students recovered 8.1% and remained 12.6 points above baseline. Black and Hispanic male students followed similar patterns, recovering 11.2% and 7.9% respectively. The race-by-disability panel shows comparable patterns, wherein White general education students recovered 46.2% of their pandemic-era increase, compared to 6.9% among Black general education students and 8% among

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Hispanic general education students. Among students with disabilities, Black and Hispanic students again showed limited recovery, remaining 10.5 and 12.2 PPs above their 2018 baselines.

The race-by-FRPL results reveal one of the clearest patterns of unequal recovery in the study. White non-FRPL and White FRPL students recovered 66.2% and 60.3% of their increases, while Black FRPL students recovered 25.4% and Hispanic FRPL students recovered only 9%, leaving both groups 12.8 PPs above their 2018 levels in 2023. Notably, Hispanic non-FRPL students also recovered only 21.9% of their increase and remained 9.6 points above baseline, suggesting that limited recovery among Hispanic students was not confined to those classified as economically disadvantaged and points to barriers that economic disadvantage alone does not explain.

The housing-status results reinforce that recovery percentages must be interpreted alongside absolute levels. White homeless students recovered 66.4% of their increase—the highest percentage among homeless subgroups—yet their 2023 chronic absenteeism rate remained at 47.8%. Black homeless students present the most concerning pattern, as their rate increased from 37.4% in 2018 to 54.2% in 2021 and remained at 53.2% in 2023, recovering only 6.1% of the increase and remaining 15.8 PPs above baseline. Hispanic homeless students recovered 28.7% but still had a 2023 rate of 42.8%.

Table 3 tests whether the descriptive recovery patterns shown in Table 2 differed significantly from the relevant White reference groups. These models sharpen the answer to Research Question 2 by distinguishing between three related but conceptually different patterns: whether intersectional groups experienced larger pandemic-era increases from 2018 to 2021, whether they remained farther above their 2018 baselines in 2023, and whether they recovered less from the 2021 peak. Across panels, the most consistent evidence of disproportionate impact appears not in the initial increase alone, but in the persistence of elevated chronic absenteeism and the slower recovery of Black and Hispanic students across multiple social positions.

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Panel A shows that Black and Hispanic students experienced significantly greater remaining elevation in 2023 than White males across gender groups. Black males and Black females remained 4.90 and 6.89 PPs farther above their 2018 baselines than White males, respectively, while Hispanic males and Hispanic females remained 5.73 and 7.01 PPs farther above baseline. These groups also recovered significantly less from the 2021 peak, with recovery disadvantages ranging from 3.35 PPs for Black males to 4.08 PPs for Black females. By contrast, White females had a modestly greater remaining elevation than White males, but did not recover significantly less. Thus, gender differences were present, but the more pronounced pattern was racialized persistence across gender.

Panel B shows a similar pattern by disability status. White students with disabilities did not differ significantly from White general education students in their pandemic-era increase, remaining elevation, or recovery. In contrast, Black and Hispanic students, both with and without disabilities, remained significantly farther above their 2018 baselines in 2023 and recovered significantly less from the 2021 peak. Remaining elevations ranged from 4.27 PPs for Black students with disabilities to 5.72 PPs for Hispanic general education students, and recovery disadvantages ranged from 3.14 to 3.89 PPs. These results suggest that disability status alone does not account for differential recovery; rather, racialized differences in recovery were evident within both general education and disability-status groups.

Panel C provides the clearest evidence that pandemic-era attendance disruptions were especially persistent for students positioned at the intersection of race and economic disadvantage. White FRPL-eligible students experienced a larger initial increase than White non-FRPL students, but they did not recover significantly less. By contrast, Black FRPL-eligible students and Hispanic FRPL-eligible students experienced both larger initial increases and substantially greater remaining elevations in 2023. Black FRPL-eligible students remained 9.37 PPs farther above baseline than White non-FRPL students, and Hispanic FRPL-eligible students remained 9.07 PPs farther above

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baseline. Hispanic FRPL-eligible students also showed the largest recovery disadvantage in the table, recovering 5.98 PPs less than White non-FRPL students. These findings suggest that economic disadvantage mattered, but its relationship to recovery was not race-neutral; the most persistent elevations were concentrated among racially minoritized students eligible for FRPL.

Panel D extends this pattern to housing status, while also showing greater uncertainty for some smaller subgroups. White students experiencing homelessness did not differ significantly from White housed students in their initial increase, remaining elevation, or recovery. Black housed and Hispanic housed students, however, remained significantly farther above baseline in 2023 and recovered significantly less than White housed students. The strongest evidence of compounded disadvantage appears for Black students experiencing homelessness, who experienced a significantly larger pandemic-era increase, remained 9.41 PPs farther above baseline in 2023, and recovered 3.72 PPs less than White housed students. Estimates for Hispanic and Other students experiencing homelessness were not statistically significant, suggesting that these results should be interpreted cautiously given the larger standard errors for these groups.

Taken together, these analyses provide the clearest answer to the second research question. Recovery was not simply slow overall—it was stratified in ways that map directly onto the intersecting dimensions of structural disadvantage that shaped which students were most affected in the first place. Students positioned at intersections of racialized and economic disadvantage, particularly Black and Hispanic FRPL-eligible students, remained substantially farther above their pre-pandemic baselines in 2023 and recovered the least from their pandemic-era peaks. Students experiencing homelessness remained the group with the highest absolute rates, with Black homeless students showing especially limited recovery. These findings reinforce the central argument of this study: that the post-pandemic attendance crisis has not been experienced or resolved uniformly, but in ways that reflect the unequal distribution of structural barriers to consistent school attendance.

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The most consistent evidence of disproportionate impact appears among Black and Hispanic students experiencing economic disadvantage and among Black students experiencing homelessness, indicating that the pandemic did not simply produce a temporary attendance shock but also intensified racialized inequalities in the return toward pre-pandemic attendance patterns.

### **Robustness Checks**

To assess whether the intersectional recovery patterns documented above are sensitive to the binary chronic absenteeism threshold, we replicated the descriptive recovery metrics and recovery models using total days absent as a continuous outcome. This approach examines whether recovery differentials reflect genuine differences in the underlying distribution of absences rather than variation in where groups sit relative to the 10% cutoff. The descriptive recovery metrics tell a consistent story. White Male students averaged 8.9 days absent in 2018, increased to 13.0 days at the 2021 peak, and declined to 11.6 days by 2023, recovering approximately 35% of their pandemic-era increase. Black Female students, by contrast, averaged 9.0 days absent in 2018, increased to 14.6 days in 2021, and remained at 14.6 days in 2023, recovering less than 1% of their increase. Hispanic Female students similarly moved from 9.8 days in 2018 to 15.4 days in 2021 and remained at 14.9 days in 2023, recovering less than 8% of their increase. This was similar to the recovery rate for Black male students. The pattern extends across intersection types. Among FRPL subgroups, White Non-FRPL students recovered approximately 50% of their pandemic-era increase in days absent while Hispanic FRPL students recovered only 13%. Black homeless students remained more than 8 days above their 2018 baseline in total days absent in 2023, compared to approximately 3 days for White housed students. Full descriptive results are reported in Appendix Table 1.

These descriptive patterns are confirmed by the saturated group-by-year linear probability models estimated with days absent as the outcome. The group-by-2023-year interaction coefficients, which estimate whether each intersectional group remained further above its 2018 baseline in days

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absent than the White reference group, are positive and statistically significant for Black and Hispanic groups across all four intersectional panels. The differential recovery estimates, computed as the difference between the group-by-2021 and group-by-2023 interaction coefficients, indicate that Black and Hispanic students recovered significantly fewer days than their White reference group counterparts, with differences ranging from approximately 0.5 to 1.5 days and remaining highly significant after accounting for grade level. Other race students also recovered significantly fewer days than White reference groups across most panels despite having lower absolute levels of absenteeism. These results confirm that the recovery differentials documented in this study reflect persistent and meaningful differences in the underlying attendance trajectories of intersectionally marginalized students and are not an artifact of the chronic absenteeism threshold. Full test results are reported in Appendix Table 2.

### **Discussion**

This study applies an intersectional lens to one of the most pressing post-pandemic educational challenges, documenting how chronic absenteeism evolved across intersecting dimensions of race, gender, economic disadvantage, disability status, and housing instability over a ten-year period in Georgia. We frame our results as reflecting the measurable consequence of how systems of racial, economic, and ableist inequity distribute barriers to attendance unequally, and argue that understanding them demands an analytic approach that treats attendance disparities as structural rather than individual phenomena (Graham et al., 2025). Consistent with a growing body of post-pandemic evidence, we find that chronic absenteeism increased sharply and has remained well above pre-pandemic levels through 2023 (Dee, 2024; Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024). The central contribution of this study, however, is not simply documenting that absenteeism rose, but that the burden of pandemic-era absenteeism and the trajectory of recovery were deeply and systematically uneven, and that these patterns are only fully visible when examined through an intersectional lens.

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### **Intersectionality Changes What Can Be Seen**

A consistent theme across our findings is that examining each dimension of students' social positions in isolation understates the degree to which absenteeism burdens accumulated among the most marginalized students. Nationally, chronic absenteeism in 2021-22 reached approximately 39% among Black students and 36% among Hispanic students, compared to 24% among White students (Malkus, 2024). Across 27 states, absenteeism among Black students rose by about 16 points on average during the pandemic, and among Hispanic students by about 16.5 points, compared to about 10 points for White students (DiMarco, 2026). Our Georgia findings are broadly consistent with these national patterns, though rates in the state did not reach those reported nationally. For instance, rates of chronic absence for Black students reached 26-28% and Hispanic students approximately 30% at their post-pandemic peaks, compared to 24-25% for White students. What the existing literature does not tell us is how these racial patterns interact with gender, poverty, disability, and housing status to produce distinct attendance trajectories.

Our findings point to the need for such intersectional analyses. We find that Hispanic female students in Georgia reached chronic absenteeism rates of 30-31% by 2021 and showed virtually no recovery through 2023, with rates remaining more than double their pre-pandemic baseline. Black female students followed a similar pattern, recovering only about 5% of their 2018-to-2021 increase and remaining 12 PPs above their baseline rates in 2023. These patterns were not visible in gender-only comparisons, which showed modest and largely parallel increases for male and female students overall. The race-by-FRPL analyses similarly revealed that Hispanic FRPL-eligible students recovered only 9% of their pandemic-era increase, while Hispanic non-FRPL students recovered just 22%, suggesting that the structural barriers constraining Hispanic students' attendance extend well beyond poverty. As Crenshaw (1991) and Collins (2015) argue, the social positions produced by

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intersecting systems of oppression are qualitatively distinct from what any single-category analysis can reveal, and our findings bear this out empirically with respect to absenteeism.

The compressed poverty gap within the Hispanic population is particularly instructive. Before the pandemic, FRPL-eligible and non-FRPL Hispanic students had nearly identical chronic absenteeism rates in Georgia, a 1 percentage point difference compared to 12 PPs for White students. Nationally, Polikoff and Pardo (2025) found that the income gap was the primary driver of widening absenteeism, with post-pandemic low-income students in Virginia 12 PPs and in North Carolina 14 PPs more likely to be chronically absent than their peers. That finding is important and consistent with our descriptive results. But it also illustrates the limitation of income-only analyses, as the compressed poverty gap among Hispanic students in Georgia suggests that race structures attendance barriers in ways that income alone does not capture. This necessitates focus on other potential factors that shape these trends, including immigration-related concerns, language access barriers, caregiving responsibilities, and differential exposure to re-engagement strategies (Dee, 2025; García & Weiss, 2018; Kirsey & Sattin-Bajaj, 2021).

### **Recovery Was Stratified**

Perhaps the most important contribution of this study is its direct examination of differential recovery across intersectional groups, an analysis that, to our knowledge, has not appeared elsewhere in the post-pandemic absenteeism literature. Prior work has documented that recovery has been slow overall, and emerging multi-state evidence confirms that students who experienced the largest pandemic-era increases, including Black and Hispanic students and those from low-income families, are generally the furthest from their pre-pandemic attendance levels (DiMarco, 2026; Graham, 2026; Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024b). Our study extends these findings by showing how recovery varies across intersectional positions and by providing statistical tests of differential recovery.

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White male and female students in Georgia recovered approximately 48% and 42% of their 2018-to-2021 increases by 2023, with rates showing a clear downward trajectory. Black and Hispanic students across nearly every intersectional category recovered far less. White non-FRPL and White FRPL students recovered 66% and 60% of their increases, while Black FRPL and Hispanic FRPL students recovered 25% and 9%. We also find that Black and Hispanic intersectional groups remained significantly farther above their 2018 baselines and recovered significantly less than their White reference-group counterparts even after accounting for grade level and other characteristics. The students whose recovery has been most limited are precisely those for whom the underlying barriers—concentrated poverty, housing instability, inadequate healthcare and mental health supports, transportation barriers, and exclusionary school conditions—were already most acute.

By 2023, FRPL-eligible White, Black, and Hispanic students had converged at similar chronic absenteeism rates of approximately 29-30%, while substantial racial disparities persisted among non-FRPL students, with Hispanic non-FRPL students remaining 12 PPs above White non-FRPL students. Poverty leveled rates upward across racial groups, but race continued to structure attendance outcomes among students not classified as economically disadvantaged — a finding that extends Polikoff and Pardo's (2025) income-focused analysis by demonstrating that even controlling for economic disadvantage, racial inequality in attendance persists in ways that require intersectional rather than additive analysis.

### **Housing Instability and the Limits of Recovery Metrics**

Students experiencing homelessness had the highest chronic absenteeism rates throughout our panel, with pre-pandemic rates ranging from 35-43% across racial groups, levels that already exceeded the pandemic peaks for many other intersectional categories. These high rates reflect the convergence of barriers that housing instability concentrates in students' lives, including school mobility, transportation disruptions, trauma exposure, and inadequate access to nutrition and

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healthcare (De Gregorio et al., 2022; Dhaliwal, 2025; Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Black homeless students present the most alarming pattern in our data, remaining at 53.2% chronically absent in 2023 after reaching 54.2% in 2021, recovering just 6% of their pandemic-era increase and remaining 16 PPs above their pre-pandemic baseline three years after initial disruptions. These figures are consistent with other evidence showing that nearly half of students experiencing homelessness were chronically absent in 2022-23, approximately 20 PPs above the national average (Burns et al., 2021; Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018).

### **The Gender Reversal as an Intersectional Finding**

A significant finding visible through our intersectional analysis is the reversal of the gender gap for Black and Hispanic students. Before the pandemic, Black and Hispanic male students had slightly higher chronic absenteeism rates than their female counterparts. By the post-pandemic period, Black and Hispanic female students had higher rates, a reversal that did not occur among White students. The existing literature has treated gender primarily as a background control and has found modest and inconsistent gender differences at the aggregate level (Dee, 2024; Gee, 2018), which is precisely why this reversal has gone undetected. While we cannot uncover specific mechanisms with the current data, the pattern is consistent with hypotheses about disproportionate caregiving and family economic responsibilities that have fallen on Black and Hispanic female students during and after the pandemic (Armstrong-Carter et al., 2025; Armstrong-Carter et al., 2026; del Río-Lozano et al., 2025). Future qualitative and mixed-methods research should examine why these students showed distinct trajectories and what barriers constrained their re-engagement.

### **Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice**

These findings carry implications for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners that flow directly from the critical and intersectional orientation of the study. For researchers, the most consequential implication is not only methodological but interpretive. Examining demographic

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characteristics in isolation or as additive controls understates where attendance burdens are concentrated and, critically, can reproduce the deficit logics that the existing literature has too often embedded in its framing of who misses school and why (Graham et al., 2025). The Losen et al. (2021) California analysis provided an early glimpse of intersectional patterns, showing that absenteeism rates increased systematically as markers of disadvantage accumulated. This study extends that contribution longitudinally and across the pandemic arc, showing that compounded disadvantage shaped not only who was most chronically absent but also who recovered least. Future research should continue building this evidence base through qualitative and mixed-methods work examining the mechanisms behind the patterns identified here. This work should include analyses of how school and district practices shape recovery as more recent data become available.

For policymakers, the findings signal that current interventions to mitigate post-pandemic absenteeism are likely insufficient for the students whose attendance has been most disrupted. The sustained and limited recovery among Hispanic and Black students points to structural barriers that require policy attention and additional research. State and district policymakers should examine whether attendance recovery efforts are reaching all students equitably, and more specifically whether outreach is accessible to Spanish-speaking families, and whether schools serving high concentrations of Hispanic students have the resources to address barriers that extend beyond the school door. The findings on homelessness are equally pressing. Despite federal McKinney-Vento resources, re-engagement efforts are clearly not reaching homeless students at sufficient scale or depth. The persistence of rates above 50% for Black homeless students three years after initial disruptions should be read not as a failure of individual families but as a signal that the systems designed to support these students remain structurally inadequate. Existing research suggests that investments in school support personnel (e.g., school counselors) and in teacher quality could be important levers for supporting students experiencing homelessness (Dhaliwal, 2025).

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For practitioners, the results point to the need for targeted, intersectionally informed re-engagement rather than universal approaches alone that they typically rely on (Singer, 2025; Singer et al., 2026). Broad messaging campaigns may reach students with informational barriers but are unlikely to reach students for whom structural conditions make regular attendance difficult. Practitioners should identify which intersectional groups in their schools have shown the least recovery and align supports accordingly. For Black and Hispanic FRPL-eligible students, this might look like connecting attendance strategies to economic supports, transportation access, and culturally responsive family engagement. For students with disabilities, integrating special education supports and health-related accommodations into re-engagement planning might be consequential. Further, for Black and Hispanic female students specifically, examining whether re-engagement efforts are attending to caregiving demands, safety concerns, and mental health challenges. Most broadly, the findings reinforce the central orientation of this study: the patterns of elevated and persistent absenteeism documented here are evidence of how structural inequality distributes barriers to attendance unequally across student populations, not of deficits among students or families. Attendance policies that respond by increasing pressure on students and families rather than addressing the conditions making attendance difficult are likely to compound rather than redress these inequities (Edwards et al., 2023; Graham et al., 2025).

### **Conclusion**

Post-pandemic recovery in chronic absenteeism has been real but deeply uneven, and that unevenness is only legible through an intersectional and structurally grounded analytic lens. The findings challenge the field to move beyond aggregate recovery narratives and toward more precise accounts of which students remain most disconnected from school and why. Ensuring equitable recovery requires not only reducing overall rates but directing resources and organizational change

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toward the students for whom the conditions making regular attendance possible have been most consistently and systematically out of reach.

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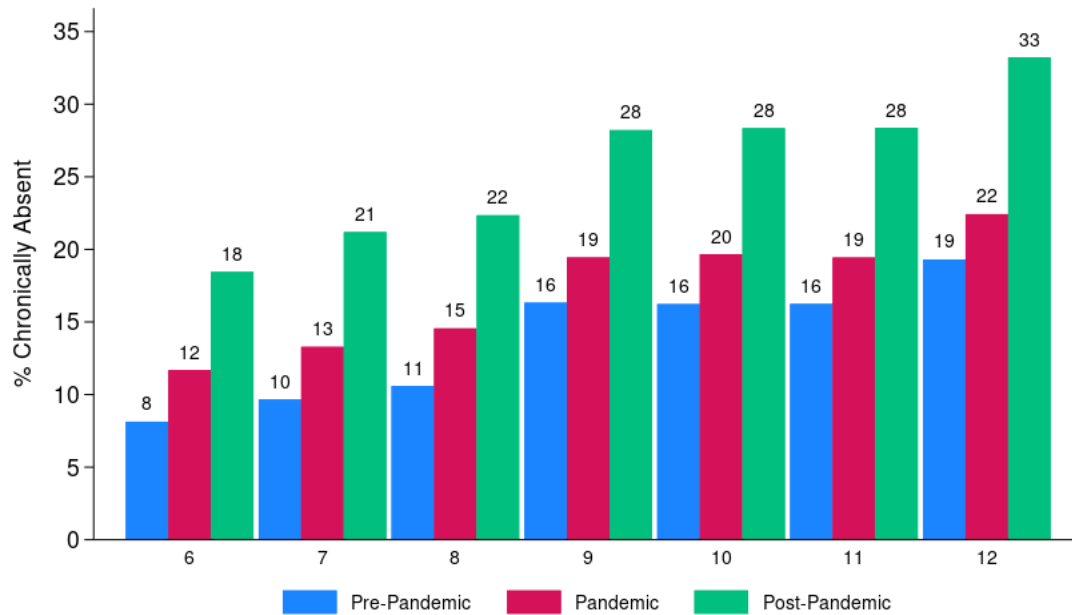
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Race and Time Period

	Pre-Pandemic	During Pandemic	Post-Pandemic
<b>All Students</b>			
Student-Year Observations	4,710,307	968,956	2,933,791
Avg. School Enrollment	1,464	1,462	1,457
Black (%)	37.1	36.7	36.9
Hispanic (%)	14.4	17.0	18.5
White (%)	41.1	37.8	35.5
Other (%)	7.5	8.4	9.1
Disability (%)	12.2	13.5	13.8
FRPL (%)	46.5	43.8	45.7
Homeless (%)	1.8	1.6	2.0
Chronically Absent (%)	14.4	23.7	25.9
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.6 (10.9)	12.4 (18.8)	13.3 (15.3)
<b>Black Students</b>			
Disability (%)	14.1	15.6	15.9
FRPL (%)	57.7	49.9	56.8
Homeless (%)	2.8	2.2	3.0
Chronically Absent (%)	15.7	27.5	29.2
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.6 (11.3)	14.5 (22.3)	14.3 (16.5)
<b>Hispanic Students</b>			
Disability (%)	11.2	12.7	12.6
FRPL (%)	68.9	58.5	58.9
Homeless (%)	1.2	1.1	1.6
Chronically Absent (%)	15.0	25.1	28.0
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.9 (11.2)	12.9 (19.1)	14.1 (15.9)
<b>White Students</b>			
Disability (%)	11.7	13.0	13.4
FRPL (%)	30.1	32.7	29.9
Homeless (%)	1.3	1.2	1.3
Chronically Absent (%)	13.9	21.3	23.3
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.8 (10.7)	11.0 (15.0)	12.5 (14.0)
<b>“Other Race” Students</b>			
Disability (%)	7.9	8.8	9.2
FRPL (%)	38.4	37.2	35.1
Homeless (%)	1.2	1.0	1.4
Chronically Absent (%)	10.2	15.1	18.4
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	6.6 (9.4)	8.1 (15.0)	10.3 (13.2)

Note: Sample includes 6-12 grade students in traditional public schools. Summary statistics are shown for pre- (2014-2018), during- (2020), and post-pandemic (2021-2023) school years. Other race refers to Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

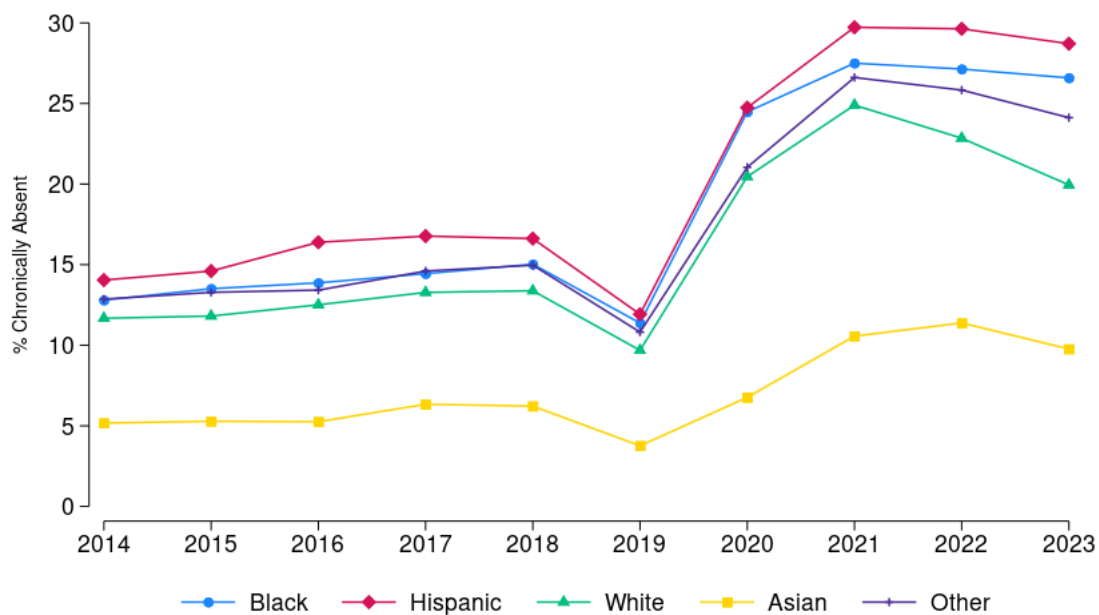
Figure 1: Chronic Absenteeism by Grade (6–12) and Covid-19 Period



Note: Figure 1 shows rates of chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the school year, for all middle and high school students in Georgia across grade levels. Rates are shown for pre- (2014-2018), during- (2020), and post-pandemic (2021-2023) school years, with 2019-2020 excluded due mid-year school closures and inconsistencies with attendance reporting.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

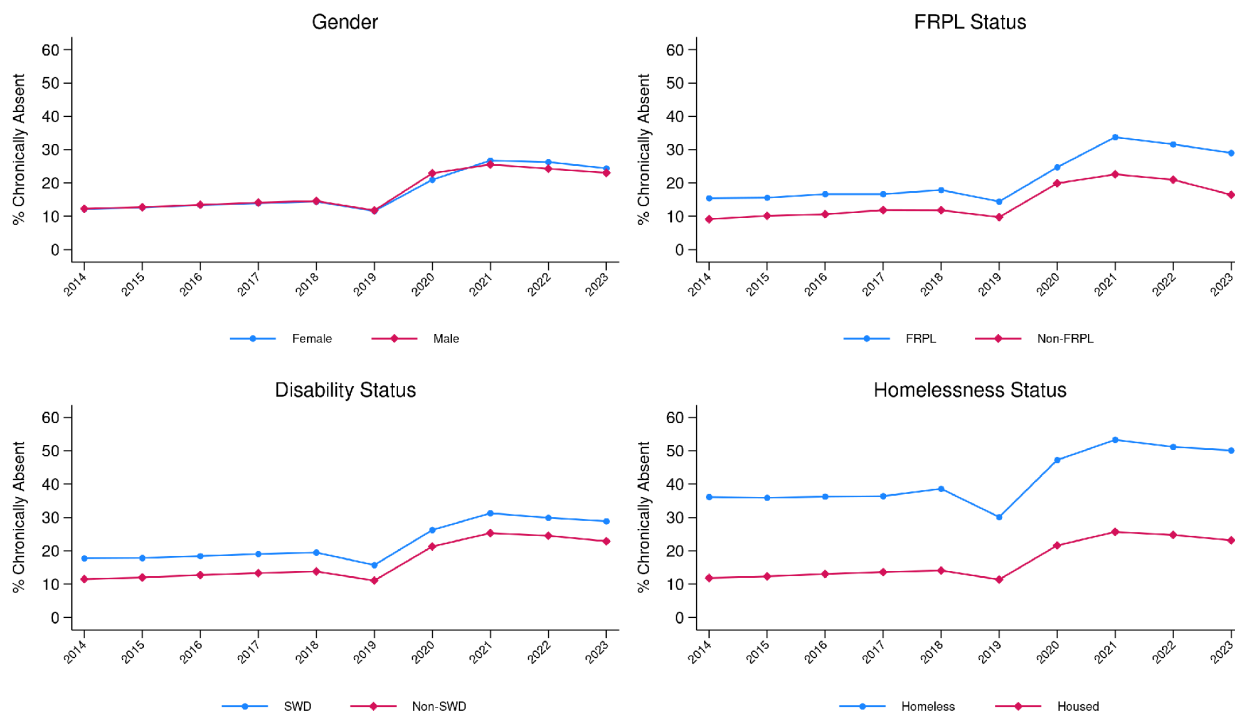
Figure 2: Absenteeism by Race Over Time



**Note:** Figure 2 displays the percentage of students classified as chronically absent by race/ethnicity from 2014 to 2023. Chronic absenteeism was defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

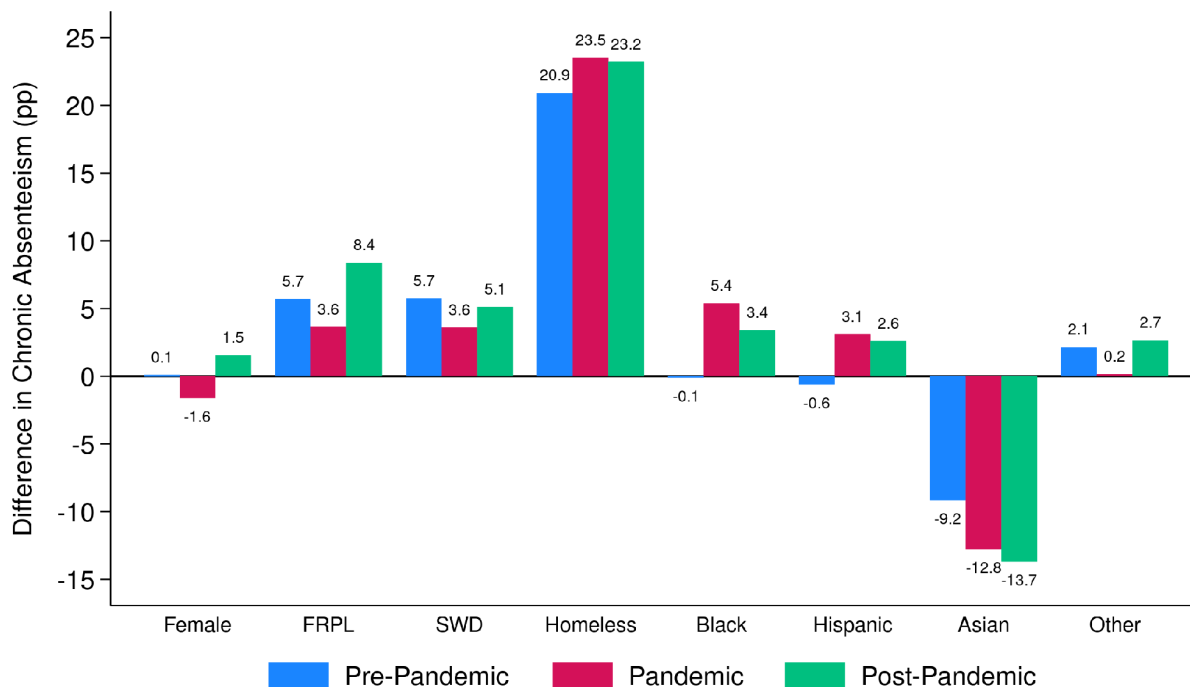
Figure 3: Student Background Characteristics and Rates of Chronic Absence



**Note.** Figure 3 reports the percentage of students classified as chronically absent from 2014 to 2023 by gender, FRPL status, IDEA disability classification, and McKinney-Vento homelessness status. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled school days. FRPL indicates eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch; SWD indicates students identified as having a disability under IDEA; and Homeless indicates students identified as experiencing homelessness under McKinney-Vento. Each panel compares chronic absenteeism trends within the corresponding subgroup classification over time.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

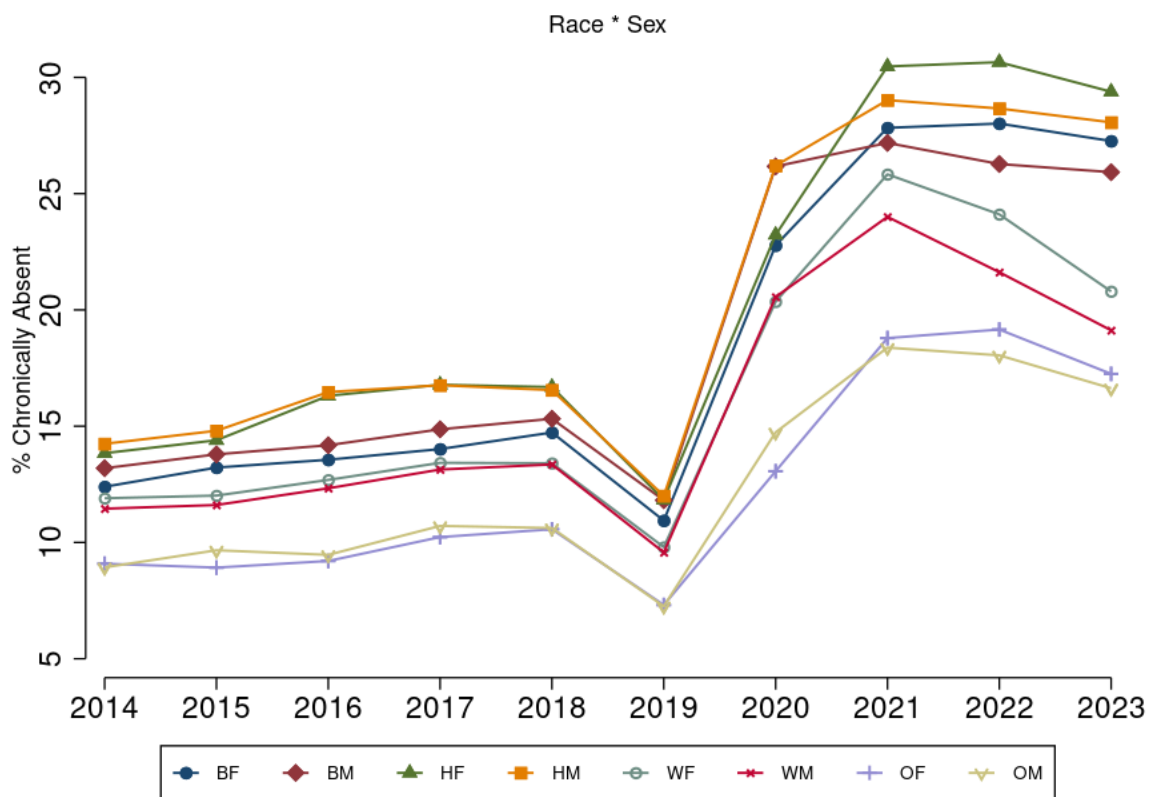
Figure 4: Adjusted Differences in Chronic Absenteeism by Student Characteristic and Pandemic Period



Note. Figure 4 shows estimates that are from period-specific linear probability models predicting chronic absenteeism. Each bar represents the adjusted percentage-point difference associated with a given student characteristic relative to the omitted reference category (White, male, non-FRPL, non-disabled, housed students) in a given period, net of all other characteristics and grade fixed effects. Pre-pandemic = 2015–19; Pandemic = 2020–21; Post-pandemic = 2021–23. FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch eligible; SWD = students with disabilities. Positive values indicate higher chronic absenteeism relative to the reference group; negative values indicate lower chronic absenteeism. pp = percentage points.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

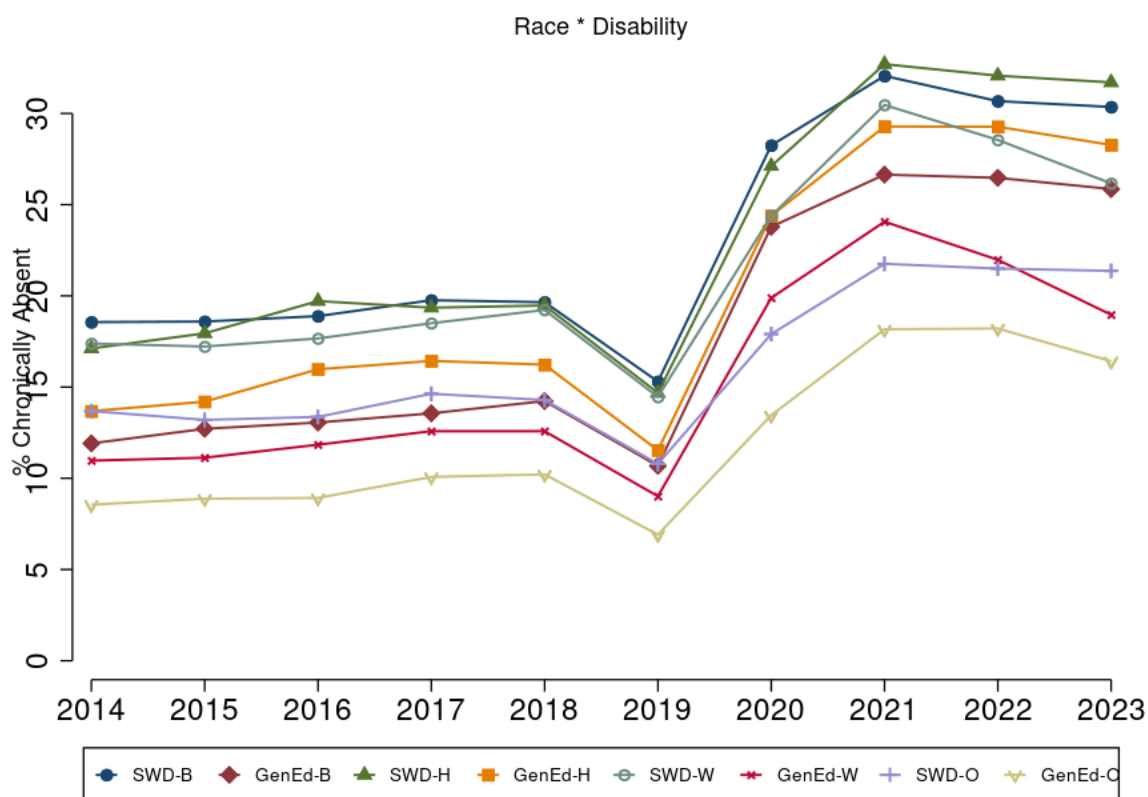
Figure 5: Absenteeism by Race and Gender



Note. Figure 5 reports the percentage of students classified as chronically absent from 2014 to 2023 by race and gender. BF = Black female; BM = Black male; HF = Hispanic female; HM = Hispanic male; WF = White female; WM = White male; OF = Other-race female; OM = Other-race male.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

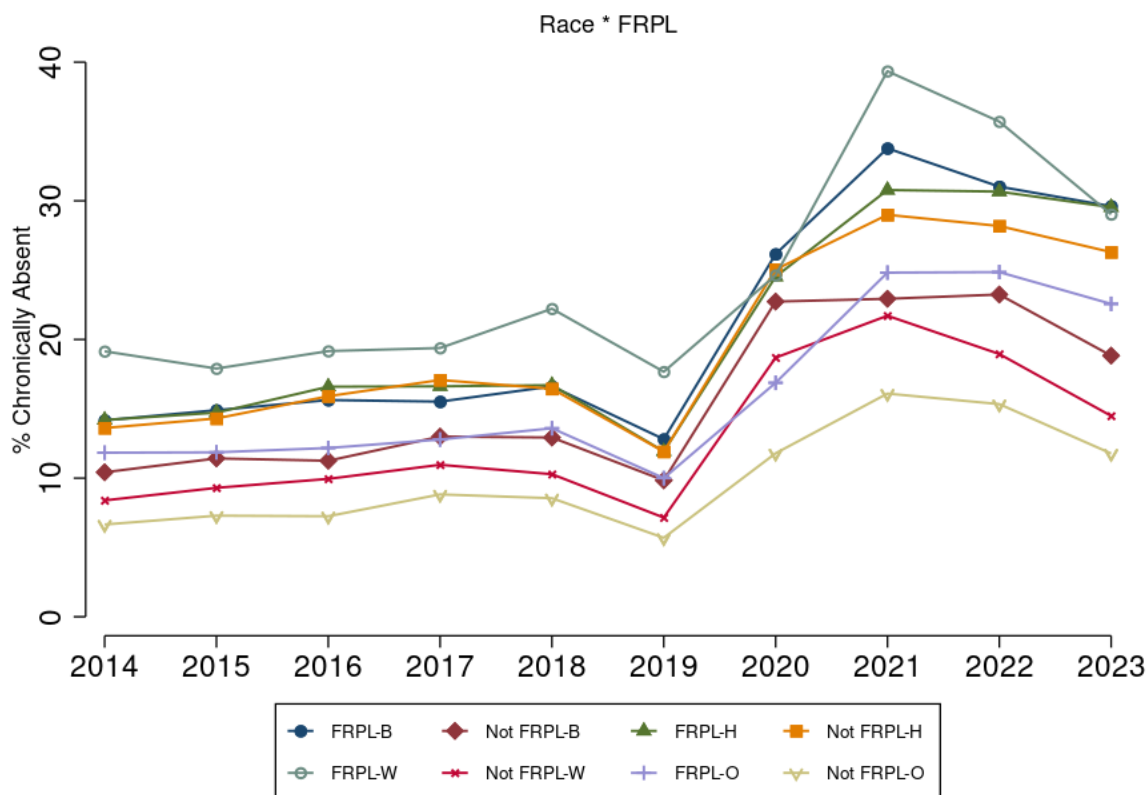
Figure 6: Absenteeism by Race and Disability



**Note.** Figure 6 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2014 to 2023 by race and IDEA disability classification. SWD-B = Black students with disabilities; GenEd-B = Black general education students; SWD-H = Hispanic students with disabilities; GenEd-H = Hispanic general education students; SWD-W = White students with disabilities; GenEd-W = White general education students; SWD-O = Other-race students with disabilities; GenEd-O = Other-race general education students.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

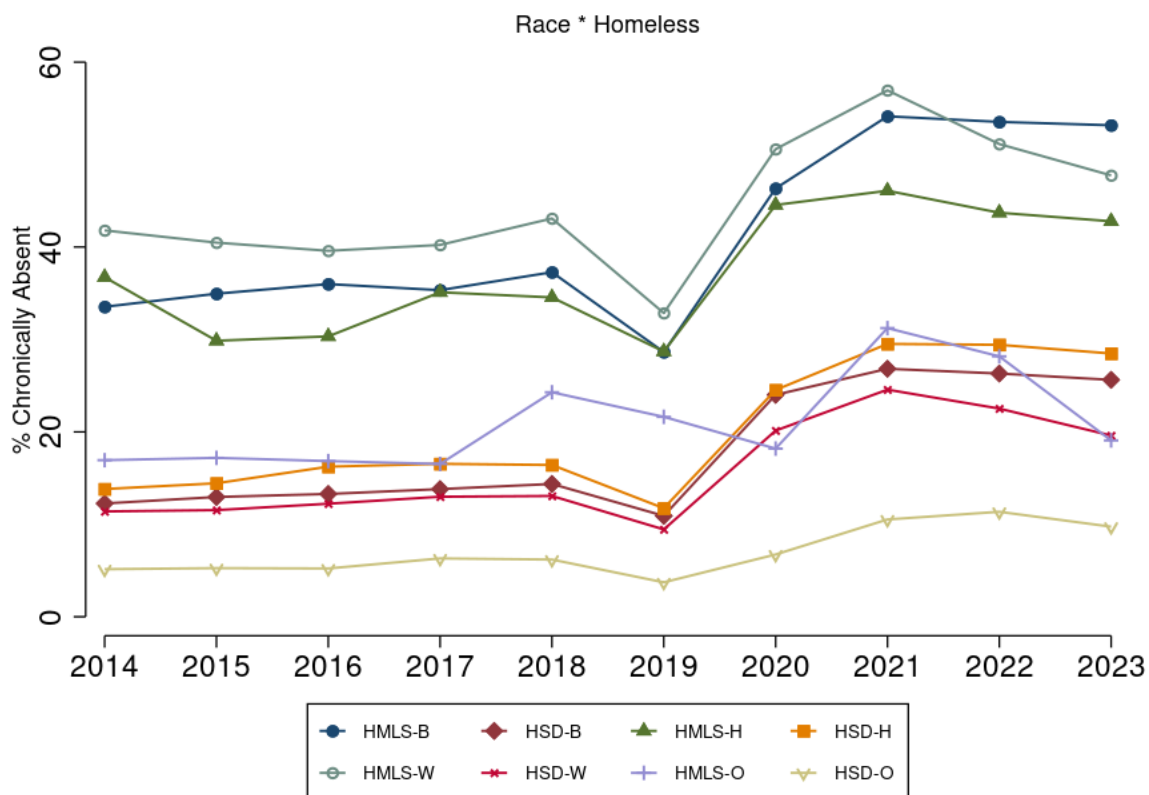
Figure 7: Absenteeism by Race and FR



**Note.** Figure 7 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2014 to 2023 by race and FRPL status. FRPL-B = Black students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; Not FRPL-B = Black students not eligible for FRPL; FRPL-H = Hispanic students eligible for FRPL; Not FRPL-H = Hispanic students not eligible for FRPL; FRPL-W = White students eligible for FRPL; Not FRPL-W = White students not eligible for FRPL; FRPL-O = Other-race students eligible for FRPL; Not FRPL-O = Other-race students not eligible for FRPL.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Figure 8: Absenteeism by Race and Homeless



**Note.** Figure 8 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2014 to 2023 by race and McKinney-Vento homelessness status. HMLS = students identified as experiencing homelessness under McKinney-Vento; HSD = housed students not identified as experiencing homelessness. B = Black; H = Hispanic; W = White; O = Other race.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Table 2: Chronic Absenteeism Rates and Recovery Metrics by Intersectional Group, 2018–2023

Group	Chronic absenteeism rate			Recovery metrics (percentage points)			
	2018	2021	2023	Increase 2018–21	Recovered 2021–23	Remaining above 2018	% of increase recovered
<b>Panel A. Race × Gender</b>							
<b>White Male (ref.)</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>47.7</b>
White Female	13.8	25.9	20.8	12.1	5.1	7.0	42.0
Black Male	15.7	27.4	26.1	11.7	1.3	10.4	11.2
Black Female	15.1	28.0	27.4	12.9	0.6	12.3	4.7
Hispanic Male	16.6	29.1	28.1	12.4	1.0	11.4	7.9
Hispanic Female	16.8	30.5	29.4	13.7	1.1	12.6	8.1
Other Male	10.2	17.5	15.8	7.4	1.7	5.6	23.7
Other Female	10.3	18.0	16.5	7.8	1.5	6.3	19.4
<b>Panel B. Race × Disability Status</b>							
<b>White Gen Ed (ref.)</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>46.2</b>
White SWD	19.5	30.5	26.2	11.0	4.3	6.7	39.1
Black Gen Ed	14.6	26.8	26.0	12.3	0.8	11.4	6.9
Black SWD	20.0	32.2	30.5	12.2	1.7	10.5	14.1
Hispanic Gen Ed	16.3	29.3	28.3	13.0	1.0	12.0	8.0
Hispanic SWD	19.5	32.7	31.7	13.2	1.0	12.2	7.7
Other Gen Ed	9.7	17.1	15.3	7.4	1.7	5.6	23.4
Other SWD	16.2	25.4	24.5	9.2	0.9	8.3	9.7
<b>Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility</b>							
<b>White Non-FRPL (ref.)</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>66.2</b>
White FRPL	22.2	39.4	29.0	17.1	10.3	6.8	60.3
Black Non-FRPL	13.3	23.1	19.1	9.7	4.0	5.7	41.0
Black FRPL	16.9	34.1	29.7	17.1	4.3	12.8	25.4
Hispanic Non-FRPL	16.7	29.0	26.3	12.3	2.7	9.6	21.9
Hispanic FRPL	16.7	30.8	29.5	14.1	1.3	12.8	9.0
Other Non-FRPL	8.1	14.9	10.5	6.8	4.4	2.4	65.3
Other FRPL	14.1	26.6	23.5	12.5	3.1	9.4	24.7
<b>Panel D. Race × Housing Status</b>							
<b>White Housed (ref.)</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>44.8</b>
White Homeless	43.1	57.0	47.8	13.9	9.2	4.7	66.4
Black Housed	14.7	27.0	25.8	12.3	1.2	11.1	10.1
Black Homeless	37.4	54.2	53.2	16.8	1.0	15.8	6.1
Hispanic Housed	16.5	29.6	28.5	13.0	1.1	12.0	8.1
Hispanic Homeless	34.6	46.1	42.8	11.5	3.3	8.2	28.7
Other Housed	9.9	17.4	15.7	7.6	1.7	5.9	22.5
Other Homeless	39.9	50.2	47.5	10.3	2.7	7.6	26.0

**Note.** "Increase 2018–21" = pandemic-era increase in chronic absenteeism from pre-pandemic baseline to peak. "Recovered 2021–23" = decline in chronic absenteeism from peak to 2023. "Remaining above 2018" = 2023 rate minus 2018 baseline rate; values above zero indicate rates have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. "% of increase recovered" = share of the 2018–21 increase that had been recovered by 2023

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Table 3: Differential Recovery in Chronic Absenteeism by Intersectional Group

Group	Differential increase 2018 to 2021 <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Differential remaining elevation in 2023 <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Less recovery than reference group <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )
<b>Panel A. Race × Gender (reference: White Male)</b>			
White Female	1.84*** (0.28)	1.66*** (0.30)	-0.18 (0.24)
Black Male	1.55* (0.78)	4.90*** (0.80)	3.35*** (0.67)
Black Female	2.80** (0.90)	6.89*** (0.95)	4.08*** (0.67)
Hispanic Male	2.05** (0.70)	5.73*** (1.06)	3.68*** (0.83)
Hispanic Female	3.40*** (0.66)	7.01*** (1.03)	3.60*** (0.73)
Other Male	-2.83*** (0.52)	0.31 (0.77)	3.14*** (0.56)
Other Female	-2.46*** (0.47)	1.02 (0.67)	3.48*** (0.58)
<b>Panel B. Race × Disability Status (reference: White Gen Ed)</b>			
White SWD	-0.24 (0.55)	0.56 (0.74)	0.81 (0.50)
Black Gen Ed	1.26 (0.90)	5.33*** (0.88)	4.07*** (0.66)
Black SWD	1.14 (0.74)	4.27*** (0.79)	3.14*** (0.79)
Hispanic Gen Ed	1.82* (0.71)	5.72*** (1.07)	3.89*** (0.77)
Hispanic SWD	1.71* (0.80)	5.47*** (1.02)	3.77*** (0.83)
Other Gen Ed	-3.72*** (0.50)	-0.27 (0.74)	3.45*** (0.56)
Other SWD	-1.91* (0.85)	2.35* (0.95)	4.26*** (0.88)
<b>Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility (reference: White Non-FRPL)</b>			
White FRPL	6.09*** (1.39)	3.46† (1.94)	-2.63† (1.59)
Black Non-FRPL	-1.07 (0.81)	1.48† (0.83)	2.55*** (0.71)
Black FRPL	6.30*** (1.02)	9.37*** (0.63)	3.07*** (0.87)
Hispanic Non-FRPL	1.50* (0.75)	5.48*** (0.96)	3.98*** (0.81)
Hispanic FRPL	3.09*** (0.78)	9.07*** (1.00)	5.98*** (0.93)
Other Non-FRPL	-4.16*** (0.44)	-1.11* (0.53)	3.05*** (0.50)
Other FRPL	1.68† (0.93)	6.14*** (0.75)	4.46*** (0.90)
<b>Panel D. Race × Housing Status (reference: White Housed)</b>			
White Homeless	2.45 (2.08)	-1.50 (2.15)	-3.95 (2.46)
Black Housed	1.27 (0.85)	4.79*** (0.88)	3.52*** (0.62)
Black Homeless	5.69*** (1.52)	9.41*** (1.56)	3.72** (1.25)
Hispanic Housed	1.81* (0.71)	5.52*** (1.09)	3.70*** (0.76)
Hispanic Homeless	0.29 (2.54)	2.11 (2.49)	1.82 (1.58)
Other Housed	-3.53*** (0.50)	-0.20 (0.73)	3.33*** (0.53)
Other Homeless	-0.61 (2.13)	1.60 (2.76)	2.21 (2.90)

**Note.** Estimates are from saturated group-by-year linear probability models estimated separately for each intersectional group. Each model includes indicators for intersectional group, year (2018 = reference), group-by-year interactions, and grade fixed effects, and standard errors clustered at the school level. Column 2 shows the group-by-2021-year interaction coefficient, indicating whether the group's pandemic-era increase differed from the White reference group. Column 3 shows the group-by-2023-year interaction coefficient, indicating whether the group remained further above its 2018 baseline than the White reference group in 2023. Column 4 shows the difference between the 2021 and 2023 interaction coefficients (lincom), indicating whether the group recovered significantly less than the White reference group between 2021 and 2023. All estimates are in percentage points. SE = standard error.

†  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Chronic Absenteeism Rates and Recovery Metrics by Intersectional Group, 2018–2023

Group	Chronic absenteeism rate			Recovery metrics (percentage points)			
	2018	2021	2023	Increase 2018–21	Recovered 2021–23	Remaining above 2018	% of increase recovered
<b>Panel A. Race × Gender</b>							
<b>White Male (ref.)</b>	8.9	13.0	11.6	4.1	1.4	2.7	34.7
White Female	9.1	13.6	12.3	4.5	1.3	3.2	29.3
Black Male	9.0	14.3	13.9	5.3	0.4	4.9	7.0
Black Female	9.0	14.6	14.6	5.6	0.0	5.6	0.3
Hispanic Male	9.7	14.8	14.6	5.1	0.2	4.9	4.0
Hispanic Female	9.8	15.4	14.9	5.5	0.4	5.1	7.8
Other Male	6.5	9.9	9.5	3.4	0.4	3.0	12.2
Other Female	6.7	10.3	10.0	3.6	0.2	3.3	6.8
<b>Panel B. Race × Disability Status</b>							
<b>White Gen Ed (ref.)</b>	8.7	13.0	11.6	4.4	1.5	2.9	33.8
White SWD	11.3	15.2	14.4	3.9	0.9	3.0	22.2
Black Gen Ed	8.7	14.1	13.9	5.4	0.2	5.3	3.5
Black SWD	10.8	16.1	15.8	5.3	0.3	5.0	5.2
Hispanic Gen Ed	9.6	14.9	14.5	5.3	0.4	4.9	6.8
Hispanic SWD	11.0	16.4	16.4	5.4	0.0	5.4	-0.7
Other Gen Ed	6.4	9.8	9.4	3.4	0.3	3.1	10.1
Other SWD	9.5	13.4	13.3	3.9	0.2	3.7	4.0
<b>Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility</b>							
<b>White Non-FRPL (ref.)</b>	7.7	12.1	9.9	4.4	2.2	2.2	49.7
White FRPL	13.2	19.3	15.4	6.2	3.9	2.2	63.6
Black Non-FRPL	7.9	12.5	11.3	4.6	1.3	3.4	27.1
Black FRPL	9.9	17.0	15.3	7.2	1.7	5.4	24.3
Hispanic Non-FRPL	9.4	14.5	13.7	5.1	0.8	4.3	16.7
Hispanic FRPL	9.9	15.9	15.1	5.9	0.7	5.2	12.6
Other Non-FRPL	5.6	9.0	7.6	3.3	1.4	1.9	42.0
Other FRPL	8.6	13.6	12.6	5.1	1.0	4.1	19.4
<b>Panel D. Race × Housing Status</b>							
<b>White Housed (ref.)</b>	8.9	13.2	11.8	4.3	1.4	2.9	31.9
White Homeless	18.1	24.5	21.3	6.3	3.1	3.2	49.6
Black Housed	8.8	14.2	13.9	5.4	0.3	5.1	5.0
Black Homeless	16.0	25.0	24.4	9.0	0.6	8.3	7.2
Hispanic Housed	9.7	15.0	14.7	5.3	0.3	5.0	5.8
Hispanic Homeless	14.5	19.7	17.9	5.2	1.8	3.4	34.7
Other Housed	6.5	10.0	9.6	3.5	0.3	3.1	10.0
Other Homeless	17.6	22.4	22.0	4.7	0.4	4.4	8.2

**Note.** Replicates Table 2 using total days absent as a continuous outcome. Increase 2018-21 = mean days absent in 2021 minus mean days absent in 2018. Recovery 2021-23 = mean days absent in 2021 minus mean days absent in 2023. Remaining above 2018 = mean days absent in 2023 minus mean days absent in 2018. Percent of increase recovered = share of the 2018-to-2021 increase in mean days absent recovered by 2023.

## INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

## Appendix 2: Differential Recovery in Chronic Absenteeism by Intersectional Group

Group	Differential increase 2018 to 2021 <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Differential remaining elevation in 2023 <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Less recovery than reference group <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )
<b>Panel A. Race × Gender (reference: White Male)</b>			
White Female	0.41***	(0.09)	0.51***
Black Male	1.16***	(0.24)	2.13***
Black Female	1.53***	(0.25)	2.87***
Hispanic Male	0.93***	(0.24)	2.08***
Hispanic Female	1.39***	(0.22)	2.33***
Other Male	-0.70***	(0.19)	0.33
Other Female	-0.55**	(0.19)	0.69**
<b>Panel B. Race × Disability Status (reference: White Gen Ed)</b>			
White SWD	-0.48**	(0.15)	0.10
Black Gen Ed	1.12***	(0.25)	2.32***
Black SWD	0.92***	(0.26)	2.00***
Hispanic Gen Ed	0.91***	(0.23)	1.95***
Hispanic SWD	0.89**	(0.28)	2.27***
Other Gen Ed	-0.92***	(0.19)	0.24
Other SWD	-0.45	(0.40)	0.82**
<b>Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility (reference: White Non-FRPL)</b>			
White FRPL	1.73**	(0.65)	0.19
Black Non-FRPL	0.27	(0.23)	0.81**
Black FRPL	2.82***	(0.46)	3.36***
Hispanic Non-FRPL	0.79**	(0.24)	1.87***
Hispanic FRPL	1.52***	(0.29)	2.98***
Other Non-FRPL	-1.05***	(0.16)	-0.16
Other FRPL	0.72+	(0.37)	2.08***
<b>Panel D. Race × Housing Status (reference: White Housed)</b>			
White Homeless	1.98*	(0.81)	0.28
Black Housed	1.10***	(0.24)	2.12***
Black Homeless	4.67***	(0.54)	5.31***
Hispanic Housed	0.97***	(0.22)	1.96***
Hispanic Homeless	0.92	(0.89)	0.55
Other Housed	-0.82***	(0.19)	0.24
Other Homeless	0.48	(1.07)	1.42

**Note.** Note. Replicates Table 3 using total days absent as a continuous outcome, OLS models, indicators for intersectional group, year (2018 = reference), group-by-year interactions, and grade fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the school level and analytic weights proportional to enrollment. All coefficients are in days rather than percentage points. Column 2 shows the group-by-2021-year interaction coefficient, indicating whether the group's pandemic-era increase in days absent differed from the White reference group. Column 3 shows the group-by-2023-year interaction coefficient, indicating whether the group remained further above its 2018 baseline in days absent than the White reference group in 2023. Column 4 shows the difference between the 2021 and 2023 interaction coefficients (lincom), indicating whether the group recovered fewer days than the White reference group between 2021 and 2023. Positive values indicate greater disadvantage relative to the reference group. SE = standard error.

+  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .