



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

Jerome Graham

Michigan State University

Richard Welsh

Vanderbilt University

Su Yon Choi

Michigan State University

This study applies an intersectional lens to examine how chronic absenteeism evolved across race, sex, economic disadvantage, disability, and housing instability before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic using data from Georgia. Consistent with national evidence, chronic absenteeism nearly doubled and remained elevated through 2023, but recovery followed distinct racialized trajectories. While White students recovered the largest share of their increases, Black students, particularly low-income and homeless students, experienced the largest increases and remained the most elevated. Hispanic students, despite pre-pandemic parity with White students, showed the least recovery across income levels. Associations between absenteeism and each characteristic differed by race and shifted over time, challenging aggregate recovery narratives and underscoring how inequitable structural barriers have shaped whose attendance recovers.

VERSION: October 2026

Suggested citation: Graham, Jerome, Richard O. Welsh, and Su Yon Choi. (2026). Compounded Disadvantage: Intersectional Inequities in Chronic Absenteeism Prevalence and Recovery During the COVID-19 Era. (EdWorkingPaper: 26-1509). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/10b5-wb77>

Abstract

This study applies an intersectional lens to examine how chronic absenteeism evolved across race, sex, economic disadvantage, disability, and housing instability before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic using data from Georgia. Consistent with national evidence, chronic absenteeism nearly doubled and remained elevated through 2023, but recovery followed distinct racialized trajectories. While White students recovered the largest share of their increases, Black students, particularly low-income and homeless students, experienced the largest increases and remained the most elevated. Hispanic students, despite pre-pandemic parity with White students, showed the least recovery across income levels. Associations between absenteeism and each characteristic differed by race and shifted over time, challenging aggregate recovery narratives and underscoring how inequitable structural barriers have shaped whose attendance recovers.

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

Introduction

Chronic absenteeism has increased dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic and, more than five years after the pandemic began, remains well above pre-pandemic norms across racial groups, states, and school types (Dee, 2024; Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024a, 2024b). This persistent rise matters given the adverse effects of chronic absenteeism on students' outcomes (Aucejo & Romano, 2016; Gershenson et al., 2017; Gottfried, 2019; Smerillo et al., 2018) and evidence that it is undermining the academic recovery efforts designed to address pandemic-era learning loss (Dewey et al., 2024; Swiderski et al., 2025). As rates decline from their pandemic-era peaks, a pressing question is whether this modest recovery is reaching all students equally or leaving behind those whose attendance was already most constrained (Graham, 2026).

The stakes are particularly pronounced because chronic absenteeism is neither randomly distributed nor adequately understood as a consequence of individual student or family behavior. Research has documented disparities associated with race, economic disadvantage, disability, and housing instability (Gee, 2018; Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Losen et al., 2021). Transportation, housing insecurity, health needs, economic precarity, and school supports shape whether students can attend consistently (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Childs & Lofton, 2021; Singer et al., 2021). These conditions operate within ecological systems and are inequitably distributed through racialized and other forms of structural inequality (Collins, 2015; Lenhoff & Singer, 2024). Treating students' demographic characteristics as isolated risk factors can therefore obscure the social arrangements that constrain attendance and reinforce deficit-oriented narratives about marginalized students and families (Edwards et al., 2023; Graham et al., 2025).

Recent studies have advanced our understanding of pandemic-era increases in absenteeism and uneven recovery, documenting differences by race, income, mobility, and other

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

characteristics (Barrat et al., 2025; Dee, 2024; Kirksey, 2025). This work typically examines students' identities separately, offering limited insight for students who occupy multiple social positions simultaneously. Intersectionality theory offers a critical orientation for filling this gap. Rooted in Black feminist scholarship, it foregrounds how social positions are constituted through interlocking systems of power rather than functioning as independent characteristics (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). For absenteeism research, this means examining how race intersects with other social identities while resisting explanations that locate attendance problems within students themselves. It also affords a lens for attending to how quantitative studies select reference categories and interpret disparities (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018).

With few exceptions (e.g., Burns et al., 2021; Losen et al., 2021), intersectional approaches remain uncommon in attendance research. We fill this gap using statewide administrative records for Georgia public school students. Georgia provides an important context given its demographic diversity, sociopolitical climate, and pandemic-era schooling conditions. Our analyses compare the pre-pandemic years (2013-2018), the 2020 pandemic year, and the subsequent 2021 through 2023 period. We assess recovery from the 2021 high point through 2023 relative to the 2018 baseline, distinguishing initial increases, subsequent declines, and remaining elevation. Further, we test whether associations between student characteristics and chronic absenteeism vary by race and over time. By combining these approaches, we move beyond parallel subgroup comparisons without treating statistical interactions as direct evidence of structural mechanisms. These contributions are organized around three research questions.

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

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

2. To what extent have pandemic-era increases in chronic absenteeism, subsequent recovery, and remaining elevation above pre-pandemic levels differed across intersectional student groups?
3. To what extent do associations between chronic absenteeism and sex, economic disadvantage, disability, and housing instability vary across racial groups, and how have these relationships changed over time?

We find that chronic absenteeism in Georgia roughly doubled, from 11% of students before the pandemic to 23% afterward, but recovery followed distinct racialized trajectories. White students recovered the largest share of their increases, Black students experienced the largest increases and remained the most elevated, and Hispanic students recovered the least. The associations between absenteeism and economic disadvantage, disability, housing instability, and sex also differed significantly across racial groups. These findings show that aggregate and single-axis recovery metrics obscure which students are being left behind and that economic disadvantage cannot be treated as race-neutral when directing post-pandemic supports.

Literature review

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

Chronic absenteeism is among the most consequential school outcomes, reflecting both whether students attend school regularly and whether they can consistently access the academic, social, and institutional supports schools provide. A large body of research links 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). Importantly, chronic absenteeism does not emerge randomly, as attendance barriers are systematically concentrated among students experiencing structural

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

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). Chronic absenteeism therefore should be understood as a manifestation of how structural inequality shapes students' access to schooling.

The pandemic disrupted schooling in ways that bear directly on attendance. Instructional disruption peaked in 2020, as schools navigated in-person, hybrid, and virtual-only models that were more variable in fall 2020 before declining steadily from January to April 2021 (Oster et al., 2021). Access to in-person instruction was inequitable, as remote learning was concentrated in schools serving more students of color, homeless students, and students eligible for FRPL (Jack et al., 2023; Parolin & Lee, 2021). When students returned to buildings, the policies and conditions they encountered differed sharply from the pre-pandemic era. Quarantine rules kept sick or exposed students at home for long periods (Silver et al., 2026), with estimates suggesting that schools without a test-to-stay option lost ~92,000 in-person days to quarantine over six weeks in fall 2021 (Harris-McCoy et al., 2021). Students also returned to schools with less stable staffing, as teacher turnover rose 17% in fall 2021 (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023).

These changes were also coupled with growing student needs, as mental health challenges grew sharply after the pandemic (Choi et al., 2026). More than 33% of high school students reported poor mental health during the pandemic (Jones et al., 2022). Educators described strained student and staff well-being during remote and hybrid instruction and expected a surge in demand for mental health support once students returned (Griffard et al., 2025). In 2021, 87% of public schools reported student struggles with their socioemotional development (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022). Evidence also shows that students' perceptions of

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

school climate worsened substantially since the pandemic (Graham et al., 2026; Graham & Gidra, 2026), potentially reflecting the influence of these pandemic-era disruptions.

Given these disruptions, it is unsurprising that chronic absenteeism rates increased dramatically during and since the pandemic. National rates nearly doubled after the pandemic, rising from roughly 16% before COVID-19 to nearly 30% in 2021, with many states continuing to report rates well above pre-pandemic levels even after modest declines (Dee, 2024; Malkus, 2024). In Arizona, chronic absenteeism peaked at 34% in 2021 and declined by five percentage points (PP) in 2022–23 but remained more than double pre-pandemic levels (Barrat et al., 2025). Using longitudinal data from North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia, Kirksey (2025) shows that the pandemic shifted the full distribution of absences upward, with increases not limited to students crossing the chronic absenteeism threshold.

Research has established that chronic absenteeism is deeply stratified by students' background characteristics (Klein et al., 2020). Pre-pandemic, students of color and low-income students already experienced disproportionately high rates of chronic absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Gee, 2018; Gottfried, 2014), and these disparities have widened since. Nationally, absenteeism in 2021 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 and low-income students experienced some of the steepest increases in absenteeism in 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 rates even after statewide rates began to decline.

Students with disabilities (SWD) and students experiencing homelessness further reflect these disparities. SWD are much more likely than their nondisabled peers to be chronically

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

absent (Gee et al., 2024; Losen et al., 2021). Unhoused students, who disproportionately face acute attendance barriers such as school mobility, lack of transportation, and the daily instability of lacking secure housing, are also highly chronically absent (Burns et al., 2021; Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018). Student sex has received less attention; before the pandemic, a few studies documented modest, inconsistent male-female 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

Because the field tends to center single-axis analyses, we still know 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. Losen et al. (2021) found that chronic absenteeism increased systematically as markers of disadvantage accumulated. Among Black high school students, absenteeism rates were 24% for students without disabilities, 35% for SWD, 37% for low-income SWD, and 54% for homeless SWD. For Latinx students, the corresponding rates were 17%, 27%, 28%, and 41%. American Indian or Alaska Native SWD experiencing homelessness had a rate of 59%. In comparison, 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 ~50% of Michigan's enrollment but represented 75% of chronically absent students.

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) shows that chronic absenteeism rates improved in 2023 but remained 75% higher than the pre-pandemic baseline, with the largest increases among high-poverty and

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

low-achieving districts. DiMarco (2026) documents that while recovery since the 2021 peak has been stronger for Black and Hispanic students in absolute terms, it has not offset their larger initial increases. Compared to White students, who remain about 5.5 PP above their pre-pandemic baseline, Black and Hispanic students remain nearly 9 and 10 PP above, respectively.

These contributions matter, but for prevalence and recovery, they examine 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, offers for understanding post-pandemic attendance disparities beyond what single-axis research has shown.

Defining and Applying Intersectionality Theory

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) coined intersectionality to elucidate how Black women experienced compounded disadvantage from both racial and gender discrimination, forms of harm that antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics overlooked when they treated race and gender as separate axes (Crenshaw, 1989). This framing aimed to shift conceptualizations of inequity away from a single-axis understanding toward interrogating how race intersects with other marginalized identities and how these intersections reflect, reinforce, and create systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination (Delgado, 2010; Gillborn, 2015). Scholars have used intersectionality to elucidate how Black girls are hypersexualized in ways that shape their experiences of sexual harassment at school (Harris & Kruger, 2023; Morris, 2016; Onyeka-Crawford et al., 2017), and how both Black boys (Lewis et al., 2010;

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Skiba et al., 2002) and Black girls (Apugo et al., 2023; Blake et al., 2011; Carter Andrews et al., 2019) are inequitably criminalized and punished in schools.

Researchers have rarely applied intersectionality to chronic absenteeism, as attendance research typically draws on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model to examine the multiple levels at which factors shape absence (Singer et al., 2021). The few exceptions show what intersectional analyses can reveal. For instance, Losen et al. (2021) found that absenteeism rose as markers of disadvantage accumulated. Gower et al. (2025) found the highest prevalence of frequent absences among Latina/x/o, Black, multiracial, and American Indian students who were also sexually diverse or targets of bias-based bullying, with bullying especially predictive of safety-related absences among transgender and gender diverse youth. Russell et al. (2024) and Kyere et al. (2023) found that Black male students are especially prone to discipline-related absenteeism. These studies surface patterns that single-axis comparisons miss and point to the need for more work like this in the post-pandemic context.

We leverage intersectionality both analytically and dispositionally to understand how interlocking educational injustices shape students' experiences and outcomes (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Natapoff, 1995; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2016). Rather than treating race, sex, disability, poverty, and homelessness independently, we understand them as markers of students' social positions within hierarchically organized systems that distribute barriers to attendance inequitably. Analytically, this means examining absenteeism across joint categories rather than parallel subgroups and testing whether the association between one dimension and absenteeism depends on students' position along another. 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 (Crenshaw, 1991). This lens shapes

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

what we look for in the data and how we interpret what we find, allowing us to surface, counter, and add nuance to majoritarian narratives about attendance and recovery.

Within this framework, we intentionally center race in our analyses by examining how other dimensions of students' social positions operate through race. This choice follows the critical race theory premise that racism is a central and enduring feature of schooling (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). It also responds to racialized attendance discourse and policy, which Edwards et al. (2023) show antagonizes Black parents in ways that create psychological and material distress, as educators frame Black families as "problems" they must overcome. Graham et al. (2025) also show that attendance disparities are too often attributed to students and families rather than to inequitable structural and within-school conditions. The other central social positions examined—poverty, housing instability, and disability identification—are themselves racialized (Annamma et al., 2013; Desmond, 2012; Oliver & Shapiro, 1995), further informing why we center race. Anchoring our analyses in race lets us test whether the other dimensions we study operate uniformly across racial groups, a question made especially salient by Georgia's racialized history of schooling, which we describe next.

Georgia as an Illustrative Case: Situating its Trajectories Socio-politically and Historically

Georgia offers an illustrative site for examining how chronic absenteeism evolved at the intersections of race and other dimensions of students' social positions, for reasons of scale, history, pandemic-era conditions, representativeness, and current policy. The state's public schools serve nearly 1.7 million students annually across approximately 2,300 schools and 180 school systems, and its student population is considerably more racially diverse than the nation's. As shown in Table 1, before the pandemic, 40% of students in our data identified as Black, 15% as Hispanic, 40% as White, and 5% as "Other race", compared to 15% Black, 28% Hispanic, and

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

46% White nationally (NCES, 2022). About 49% of students were eligible for FRPL, 12% were SWD, and 2% were identified as homeless. The size and diversity of these populations matter for intersectional analysis, as they allow estimates for groups that are often too small to examine.

Georgia's attendance trends also closely track national patterns, which suggests that insights from the state extend beyond it. Table 1 shows chronic absenteeism patterns in Georgia mirror national trends (Malkus, 2025), increasing from 11% before the pandemic to 20% during it and 23% afterward, while average days absent rose from about 8 to 12 days. Racial differences were modest pre-pandemic but widened afterward, as Black and Hispanic students reached post-pandemic rates of 27% and 24%, respectively, compared to 20% for White students and 12% for "Other race" students (see Appendix Table 1 for more on the "Other race" group). Black and Hispanic students also faced more concentrated disadvantage across multiple dimensions. Both groups had substantially higher rates of FRPL eligibility than White students, with 60% of Black students and 71% of Hispanic students eligible for FRPL in the post-pandemic period compared to 33% of White students. Black students also had the highest rates of homelessness and disability identification in every period. Thus, the groups with the highest absenteeism rates were also those most exposed to multiple forms of structural disadvantage simultaneously, reinforcing the importance of examining chronic absenteeism through an intersectional lens.

Georgia's history also makes race a consequential lens for understanding its absenteeism. The state's schools carry the legacy of de jure segregation, resistance to desegregation, and the White flight that reshaped metropolitan Atlanta and its suburban districts (Kruse, 2005). More contemporarily, the Hispanic student population more than doubled in the decade before our panel began (Beaudette, 2014), and it continued to grow from 15% to 18.5% of students across our panel. This growth coincided with restrictive state immigration laws and local partnerships

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

with federal immigration enforcement, conditions research links to reduced attendance in affected communities (Dee, 2025; Kirksey & Sattin-Bajaj, 2021). This sociopolitical context therefore provides a backdrop for interrogating whether, how, and to what extent absenteeism persistence and recovery look different for these students.

The pandemic years brought conditions in Georgia that were unevenly distributed by race and class, positioning the state well for examining whether recovery was similarly stratified. Districts largely made reopening decisions, and the 12 systems that remained fully virtual through fall 2020 disproportionately served students of color and low-income students (COVID-19 School Data Hub, n.d.). The pandemic also coincided with the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and Rayshard Brooks in June 2020, which placed Georgia at the center of the 2020 protests for racial justice. Two years later, the state enacted the Protect Students First Act, which restricted instruction on "divisive concepts" related to race and constrained how schools could engage the racial conditions students experienced. As students returned to buildings, supports that had cushioned families also receded. For instance, the expanded Child Tax Credit, which reduced food insufficiency in low-income households, expired in 2021, universal free school meal waivers ended after the 2021-22 school year, and Georgia, which has not expanded Medicaid, began disenrolling residents from continuous coverage in 2023 (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, 2026; KFF, 2026; Shafer et al., 2022; Toossi, 2024). While we do not treat these conditions as causes of the patterns we document, they contextualize our study's three periods within the systems and events through which racialized, economic, and ableist inequalities operated.

Lastly, Georgia is also illustrative because the state is actively reshaping its attendance policy. The state's accountability system credits schools for the share of students absent less than

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

10% of enrolled days (Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE], 2018), and its compulsory attendance law makes parents guilty of a misdemeanor once notified of five unexcused absences, punishable by fines, community service, or up to 30 days in jail (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1, 2025). Further, Senate Bill 123, signed in 2025, prohibits expelling students solely for absences and requires attendance review teams in school systems with chronic absenteeism rates of at least 10% and schools with rates of at least 15%. GaDOE has also committed to the national 50% Challenge to cut chronic absenteeism in half within five years (Attendance Works, n.d.). As Georgia builds the infrastructure to identify and support chronically absent students, evidence on which students have recovered least, and whether the barriers they face differ by race, can inform where these efforts are directed.

Data

Our analyses draw on administrative data from GaDOE and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). These agencies maintain annual enrollment, attendance, and student demographic records for all public-school students in the state. GOSA attendance files record how many days each student was present or absent each school year. We link these records to demographic files that identify each student's race/ethnicity, sex, disability status, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness status, along with school and grade identifiers.

The panel spans the 2013 through 2023 (year represents fall semester) school years and begins with roughly 21.5 million student-year records. Missing data were minimal, though we removed 12,112 records (.06%) lacking attendance information and 1,725 records (.008%) lacking a race/ethnicity indicator. No records were missing sex, FRPL eligibility, disability status, or homelessness status. We also excluded 606,303 prekindergarten records and 1,870 records with undefined or unknown grade levels. We include 2019 in our descriptive analyses

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

but exclude it from our regression analyses because mid-year COVID-19 school closures produced inconsistent attendance reporting across districts. Our regression analyses compare a pre-pandemic baseline (2013-2018) with the pandemic year (2020) and a post-pandemic period (2021-2023). The final analytic dataset includes just over 17.5 million student-year observations.

Our primary outcome is chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the school days a student was enrolled, including both excused and unexcused absences. We focus on chronic absenteeism because the 10% threshold anchors how Georgia monitors and responds to attendance, as Senate Bill 123 ties required attendance review teams to chronic absenteeism rates. To account for variation in school calendars, we cap the number of possible school days at 180. We keep students enrolled for only part of the school year in the sample, and we determine their chronic absenteeism status using the number of school days they were enrolled. In supplementary analyses, we replicate our main analyses using total days absent as a continuous measure. The demographic files classify students as Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI), White, or multiracial. Our main analyses combine Asian, AIAN, NHPI, and multiracial students into an “Other race” category, while Appendix Table 1 provides separate descriptive information on each subgroup.

Analytic Approach

RQ1. Prevalence and Adjusted Differences.

We first calculate annual, unweighted percentages of students chronically absent, both for individual characteristics and for four sets of intersections: race by sex, disability status, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness. Each intersection defines eight mutually exclusive groups, and our analyses show trends for both single- and multi-axes groups. To complement these trends, we estimate separate linear probability models for the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

periods, adjusting simultaneously for race, sex, disability status, FRPL eligibility, homelessness, and grade. We use effect coding so that each category's estimate represents its adjusted deviation from the average across categories of that characteristic, rather than a difference from a selected reference group. For race, indicators equal 1 for the corresponding Black, Hispanic, or "Other race" category, -1 for White students, and 0 otherwise. Binary characteristics (sex, FRPL, SWD, and homelessness) are coded -1 and 1. We include grade fixed effects given the grade-level variation documented in Appendix Figure 1. The model estimated separately for each period is:

$$CA_{isgt} = \alpha_p + \mathbf{R}_{it}^T \boldsymbol{\beta}_p + \mathbf{X}_{it}^T \boldsymbol{\theta}_p + \lambda_{gp} + \varepsilon_{isgt}$$

where CA_{isgt} indicates whether student i in school s , grade g , and school year t was chronically absent. $\mathbf{R}_{it}$ contains the three race effect codes, $\mathbf{X}_{it}$ contains the four effect-coded indicators for sex, disability, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness, and λ_{gp} denotes grade fixed effects within period p . We allow these characteristics to change across years. We multiply estimates by 100 to express prevalence in PP. These models show how each characteristic is associated with chronic absenteeism after accounting for the other characteristics and grade, and when examined in concert with the intersectional figures, they highlight what single-axis approaches can obscure.

RQ2. Pandemic-era Increases and Recovery.

We next shift to recovery, which we define as the decline in chronic absenteeism (or days absent) from 2021, the pandemic-era peak, to 2023. We express recovery both in PP, which we use to test whether groups recovered more or less than average, and as a share of each group's 2018 to 2021 increase, which indicates how much of its pandemic-era rise a group had reversed. We use 2018 as the pre-pandemic baseline, 2021 as the high point, and 2023 as the final observation. For each intersectional group j , we calculate the increase from 2018 to 2021, the

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

decline from 2021 to 2023, and the remaining elevation in 2023 above the baseline. The percentage of the initial increase recovered is, therefore:

$$\text{Recovery}_j(\%) = 100 \frac{A_{j,2021} - A_{j,2023}}{A_{j,2021} - A_{j,2018}},$$

where $A_{j,t}$ is the group's chronic absenteeism rate in year t . A value of 100% indicates a return to the 2018 rate, whereas 0% indicates no decline from 2021. We also report remaining elevation because a group may show substantial recovery while still experiencing a high absolute rate. Parallel analyses using total days absent are in Appendix Table 2. We also conduct supplemental analyses using the median across all pre-pandemic years as the baseline, and the substantive takeaways from these estimates are qualitatively similar (*results available upon request*).

We then estimate saturated group-by-year linear probability models separately for the four intersectional classifications, using student-year records from 2018, 2021, and 2023. Our model is expressed as follows:

$$CA_{isgt} = \alpha + \mathbf{E}_{it}^T \boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{T}_t^T \boldsymbol{\rho} + (\mathbf{E}_{it} \times \mathbf{T}_t)^T \boldsymbol{\delta} + \lambda_g + \varepsilon_{isgt}$$

where $\mathbf{E}_{it}$ contains the effect-coded indicators for our intersectional groups, while $\mathbf{T}_t$ contains indicators for each year. The interaction term represents all combinations of intersectional groups and years, allowing changes in chronic absenteeism to vary across groups, and λ_g denotes grade fixed effects. For each group j , we estimate its relative pandemic-era increase ($\delta_{j,2021}$), remaining elevation ($\delta_{j,2023}$), and differential recovery ($\delta_{j,2023} - \delta_{j,2021}$). Positive values for the last contrast indicate less recovery than the average across groups. For the effect-coded focal group, its deviation is calculated as the negative sum of the other seven groups' deviations. These contrasts use Benjamini–Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) adjustments across all 96 group-by-year contrasts in Table 3 to account for multiple comparisons by controlling the expected

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

proportion of false positives among statistically significant findings (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995). Appendix Table 3 presents White-reference comparisons as a sensitivity check and Appendix Table 4 repeats the effect-coded recovery models using days absent as the outcome.

RQ3: Racial differences in characteristic gaps and their changes. Our third research question examines whether the associations between chronic absenteeism and sex, disability status, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness differ by race and whether these differences changed over time. For each characteristic, we estimate a separate fully interacted race-by-characteristic-by-year linear probability model using observations from 2018, 2021, and 2023. The vector ($\mathbf{Z}_{it}$) contains three effect-coded race indicators, an effect-coded binary indicator for the respective characteristic, and their three interaction terms. Using ($\mathbf{T}_t$) to represent indicators for 2021 and 2023, with 2018 as the baseline year, the model is expressed as:

$$CA_{isgt} = \alpha + \mathbf{Z}_{it}^T \boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{T}t^T \boldsymbol{\rho} + (\mathbf{Z}_{it} \times \mathbf{T}t)^T \boldsymbol{\delta} + \lambda_g + \varepsilon_{isgt}$$

The interaction term represents all combinations of the variables in $\mathbf{Z}_{it}$ and the year indicators, allowing their associations with chronic absenteeism to change over time. The three race-by-characteristic terms capture differences in these associations across racial groups in 2018, while the corresponding interactions with year capture changes in these differences in 2021 and 2023. We conduct two omnibus tests for each characteristic: a three-degree-of-freedom test of whether the baseline race-by-characteristic interactions jointly equal zero and a six-degree-of-freedom test of whether these interactions changed over time.

To examine the direction and magnitude of these differences, we calculate the adjusted gap in chronic absenteeism between the two categories of each characteristic within each racial group. These gaps are expressed in PP and represent female minus male, disability minus no disability, FRPL-eligible minus non-FRPL, and homelessness minus housed. For each interval,

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

we calculate the average change in these gaps across the four racial groups and estimate how much each group's change differs from that average:

$$B_{r,t_0,t_1} = (D_{r,t_1} - D_{r,t_0}) - \frac{1}{4} \sum_{q=1}^4 (D_{q,t_1} - D_{q,t_0})$$

where, $(D_{r,t})$ represents the adjusted gap for racial group (r) in year (t), and (B_{r,t_0,t_1}) indicates how much the change in that gap differs from the average change across racial groups. We estimate these contrasts for 2018–2021, 2021–2023, and 2018–2023. For example, a positive estimate indicates that a racial group's characteristic gap increased more, or decreased less, than the average across racial groups. Because the binary characteristic is effect-coded as -1 and 1 , we multiply the corresponding interaction contrasts by 2 to recover the full difference between its two categories, as seen in Table 5. These analyses identify whether disparities associated with student characteristics differ across racial groups and how these relationships evolved over time.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, although our study moves absenteeism research beyond traditional single-axis comparisons, our analyses remain limited because they examine only how racialized social positions intersect with other dimensions of inequality. We therefore do not examine how students' simultaneous positioning across multiple social dimensions shapes their experiences of chronic absenteeism. Centering race matters, given how attendance challenges have been racialized (Graham et al., 2025; Edwards et al., 2023), but examining higher-order intersections could offer additional insight into the complexity of students' social positions. A limitation is that we do not use richer intersectional designs, including models of higher-order interactions and multilevel approaches that estimate outcomes across many intersectional strata at once (Bauer et al., 2021; Evans et al., 2018). Our use of effect coding also

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

warrants consideration. Although this approach avoids positioning White students as the normative reference group (Gillborn et al., 2018; Mayhew & Simonoff, 2015; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008), comparisons with an equally weighted group mean can make disparities between the most and least advantaged groups less immediately apparent.

Several administrative data constraints also limit our study. Indicators of FRPL eligibility, disability status, and homelessness depend on identification and reporting practices that vary across schools and may undercount the populations they intend to capture (Dhaliwal et al., 2026). Further, our binary administrative measure of sex does not capture students' gender identities, potentially obscuring disparities among transgender and nonbinary students. This limitation is particularly consequential given evidence that nonbinary students report missing school because of safety concerns more frequently than their cisgender peers (Kosciw et al., 2022). Another potential issue is that we aggregate several racial groups into an "Other race" category because of small sample sizes, which may mask meaningful differences among these populations. To partially address this limitation, we provide additional descriptive information about the groups comprising this category in Appendix Table 1.

Several limitations also concern the interpretation and broader relevance of our findings. Our analyses are descriptive and cannot establish the extent to which the pandemic caused the changes we observe or identify the mechanisms underlying these disparities. Attendance reporting may also have varied across schools during remote and hybrid instruction, potentially affecting the comparability of pandemic-era records. Although we exclude 2019 from our main analyses because we were most uncertain about reporting, we cannot fully account for differences in attendance reporting during 2020. Further, our focus on one state may limit generalizability to states with different sociopolitical and historical contexts. That said, our

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

findings align well with existing evidence (DiMarco, 2026; Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024; Polikoff & Pardo, 2025), supporting their broader relevance.

Finally, the recovery differentials we document may partly reflect compositional changes across periods rather than only differences in attendance trajectories. For example, unhoused or highly mobile students may have disproportionately exited the sample between 2018 and 2023, leaving groups that are not directly comparable across years. We investigated this concern by re-estimating the saturated group-by-year models using a consistent panel of students observed in all three years. We found results that attenuated but did not fundamentally change our key observations (results available upon request). However, this approach introduces its own limitations because students most likely to exit the sample may also experience the greatest barriers to attendance and recovery. Indeed, these models attenuated or reversed several recovery differentials for Black and Hispanic students, consistent with the possibility that the restricted sample disproportionately retains more stable students. Although these results cannot establish the direction or magnitude of selection bias, they illustrate how restricting the sample may obscure disparities among more vulnerable students. We therefore retain the broader sample in our primary analyses, with consistent-panel estimates available upon request.

Findings

Research Question 1. Widespread Increases and Intersecting Disparities

Chronic absenteeism rose for every racial group after the onset of the pandemic and remained elevated through 2023 (Figure 1). Statewide, the share of chronically absent students rose from 11.2% before the pandemic to 20.3% in 2020 and averaged 22.8% afterward, while mean days absent rose from 7.6 to 12.1 (Table 1). Black students had the highest rates throughout, rising from 15% in 2018 to 28% in 2021 and remaining near 25% in 2023. Hispanic

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

students' rates rose from 12% to 25% in 2021, and remained at 23% in 2023. White students rose from 12% to 22% but declined to 18% by 2023. The low average for "Other race" students largely reflects Asian students, who constitute 78% of the category. By contrast, AIAN and NHPI students had post-pandemic rates of 27% and 26%, respectively, comparable to Black students (Appendix Table 1). Still, rates among this group were twice as high in 2021 and 2022.

These increases spanned the full distribution of K–12 students, with post-pandemic rates more than doubling in kindergarten and grades 3–5 and reaching 33% among 12th graders (Appendix Figure 1). Single-characteristic trends reveal persistent disparities by FRPL eligibility, disability, and homelessness, but little difference by sex (Appendix Figure 2). Rates are consistently highest among homeless students, reaching roughly 50% in 2021. FRPL-eligible students peak closer to 40%, while SWD peak at 30%. Across all groups, evidence of recovery is limited, as rates changed only minimally from 2022 to 2023.

Figure 2 shows pre-, during-, and post-pandemic models adjusted for student characteristics and grade that provide additional context for the presence and magnitude of absenteeism disparities. Pre-pandemic, Black and White students had nearly identical deviations from the equally weighted racial-category mean, while Hispanic students were slightly higher (1.4 PP) and "Other race" students were 3 PP lower. Absenteeism disparities grew substantially for several race groups during and after the pandemic. Black students' rates were about 5 and 2.99 PP higher than average during and after the pandemic, respectively. The corresponding estimates for Hispanic students were 3.6 and 3.8 PP, compared with .4 PP for White students in both periods. The "Other race" group remained consistently below average, though this result should be interpreted with caution given that Asian students disproportionately drive it.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Figure 2 shows homelessness was associated with the largest adjusted disparity throughout the study, with students experiencing homelessness approximately 20 PP more likely to be chronically absent than housed students before the pandemic and 23 PP more likely afterward. While smaller in magnitude, we also observed large FRPL-based disparities that grew after the pandemic. The FRPL gap doubled from 4 to 8.4 PP before and after the pandemic, respectively. Meanwhile, the adjusted absenteeism gap between students with and without disabilities remained relatively stable across periods, narrowing from 5 PP before the pandemic to 3.6 PP during the pandemic, then widening slightly to 4.6 PP afterward. Differences by sex changed direction, as male students were 1.4 PP more likely to be chronically absent in 2020 and female students 1.2 PP more likely in the post-pandemic period.

The intersectional trends in Figures 3 through 6 show how race intersected with each of our observed student characteristics. Consistent with these patterns, all four observed interactions were jointly significant in 2018, with the strongest departure from additivity for FRPL eligibility (Table 4). Thus, the association between each characteristic and chronic absenteeism already differed by race before the pandemic. However, the relationships between race and each observed characteristic changed over time. This pattern was more subtle for sex, as differences between males and females were small but shifted direction over time in race-specific ways. In 2020, male students were more likely than female students to be chronically absent, especially among Black (27% versus 24%) and Hispanic students (21% versus 19%). Afterward, female students had slightly higher rates among White and Hispanic students, while among Black students, the male-female gap largely attenuated.

The intersection of race and disability revealed both persistent disparities and shifts in the relative positioning of student groups (Figure 4). Black SWD had the highest chronic

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

absenteeism rates from 2014 onward, reaching 32% in 2021 and remaining near 30% in 2023. Before the pandemic, White and Hispanic SWD had similar rates (~17% in 2018), but this pattern changed by 2023, when rates reached 27% among Hispanic SWD compared with 24% among their White peers. Similar shifts emerged across disability classifications. In 2018, White SWD had higher rates than Black general education students (17% versus 14%), whereas by 2023, Black general education students had slightly higher rates (25% versus 24%). Although SWD consistently experienced higher rates than general education students within each racial group, these patterns show how racial disparities extended across disability classifications and became more pronounced in the post-pandemic period.

The association between FRPL and chronic absenteeism also varied considerably across racial groups (Figure 5). In 2018, FRPL eligibility was associated with a 9.5 PP difference among White students, compared with 3.1 points among Black students and virtually no difference among Hispanic students. These gaps widened during the pandemic, reaching ~16 PP among White students and 10 PP among Black students in 2021. White FRPL-eligible students recorded the highest chronic absenteeism rate in the panel that year (34%), narrowly exceeding Black FRPL-eligible students (33.6%). By 2023, however, Black FRPL-eligible students had higher rates than their White counterparts (27.2% versus 25%), reflecting a larger decline from the pandemic peak for White students. Meanwhile, Hispanic students not eligible for FRPL (22%) had rates much closer to FRPL-eligible White students (25%) than to White students not eligible for FRPL (12.5%). Students experiencing homelessness had the highest rates in every racial group, with 28% to 35% chronically absent in 2018 and 34% to 50% in 2023 (Figure 6). Black students experiencing homelessness had the highest rates among them, rising from 35% in 2018 to 54% in 2021 and remaining at 50% in 2023, compared to 42% of their White peers.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Research Question 2. Inequitable Recovery from Pandemic-Era Increases

The findings above make clear that pandemic-era increases in absenteeism were broad, but subsequent recovery differed sharply across our observed groups. Table 2 reports each group's increase from 2018 to 2021, decline through 2023, and remaining elevation above 2018. Table 3 compares these changes with the equally weighted mean of the eight intersectional groups in each panel, adjusting for multiple comparisons. We also calculated a descriptive benchmark showing each group's hypothetical 2023 rate had it recovered the mean percentage of its 2018–2021 increase across those eight groups (results available upon request). Together, these analyses reveal three distinct racialized trajectories.

The eight White intersectional groups recovered between 32% and 65% of their pandemic-era increases and ended 2023 between 3.2 and 8 PP above their 2018 rates (Table 2). Seven of the eight recovered significantly more than their panel average, and the eighth—housed White students—did not differ from it (Table 3). By contrast, Black students saw the largest increases and remained the highest. They experienced the largest pandemic-era increases, rising 10.7 to 18.7 PP between 2018 and 2021, and seven of eight groups exceeded their panel average. Their recovery pace, however, was at or above the average. Black male, Black general education, and Black FRPL-eligible students recovered significantly more than average, and no Black group recovered significantly less. Recovering 18% to 36% of a larger increase still left every Black group except those not eligible for FRPL between 10.6 and 15.1 PP above its 2018 rate, and seven of eight remained significantly more elevated than average in 2023.

Hispanic students followed a third path—they recovered the least. Their 2018 rates matched those of White students, and their increases exceeded the panel average by smaller margins than those of Black students (2 to 2.5 PP where significant). However, their recovery

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

was considerably more limited. Hispanic groups recovered 12% to 21% of their increases, consistently lower than Black and White students (Table 2), and five of eight observed groups recovered significantly less than the eight-group mean by .6 to 1.8 PP (Table 3). Hispanic groups therefore ended 2023 between 9.3 and 11.5 PP above their 2018 rates, and seven of eight remained significantly above average (1.8 to 4.2 PP), levels comparable to those of Black students despite smaller initial increases.

These trajectories distinguish persistence from pace. Black intersectional groups generally remained more elevated following larger initial increases, while Hispanic groups showed relatively less recovery. When White students serve as the reference group, both patterns appear as recovery shortfalls, with six of eight Black groups recovering .6 to 2.1 PP less and seven of eight Hispanic groups 1.5 to 3.5 PP less than their White counterparts (Appendix Table 3). The effect-coded estimates show that the Black shortfall relative to White students reflects White students' strong recovery rather than a slower recovery pace than the shared average. "Other race" students experienced the smallest increases but also recovered slowly, with seven of eight groups recovering significantly less than average. FRPL-eligible "Other race" students had the largest recovery shortfall (2.66 PP), and "Other race" SWD recovered only 11% of their increase.

The patterns largely held when we examined total days absent. White observed groups recovered 24% to 54% of their increase in days missed, compared with 13% to 30% for Black groups and 7% to 33% for Hispanic groups (Appendix Table 2). Black and Hispanic groups remained significantly more elevated than the eight-group mean in 14 of 16 comparisons (Appendix Table 4). Evidence of slower Hispanic recovery was less consistent for days missed, as both FRPL groups and the unhoused group of Hispanic students recovered significantly less than average, suggesting sensitivity to how absenteeism is measured.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

The race-by-FRPL panel makes these trajectories particularly clear (Table 3). FRPL-eligible students had the largest increases, but their paths diverged by race. White FRPL-eligible students saw a large increase (3.89 PP above average), followed by the largest recovery in Table 3 (4.55 PP above average). Black FRPL-eligible students had the largest increase in the panel (6.24 PP above average) and, despite recovering faster than average, remained 4.17 PP above average in 2023. Hispanic FRPL-eligible students had a smaller increase (2.39 PP) but recovered more slowly than average (1.78 PP). Hispanic students not eligible for FRPL saw an increase that matched the average. However, they recovered more slowly (1.78 PP) and remained significantly elevated (1.77 PP), whereas Black students not eligible for FRPL did not differ from the average. Persistent elevation among Hispanic students thus extended beyond those classified as economically disadvantaged, whereas among Black students it was more concentrated among FRPL-eligible students. The proportional-recovery benchmark reinforces this difference for Black and Hispanic students. If the Hispanic FRPL-eligible and noneligible groups had each recovered at an average rate (36.2%), their 2023 rates would have been 20.9% and 19.7%, respectively, rather than the observed 23.5% and 22% (available upon request).

Housing instability shows why proportional recovery cannot substitute for absolute need (Table 2). White students experiencing homelessness recovered 44% of their initial increase, with a significantly larger adjusted decline than the eight-group average (2.99 PP), yet 42% remained chronically absent in 2023. Black homeless students had the largest initial increase of any group in Table 2, rising from 35.2% in 2018 to 53.9% in 2021. Although they recovered 19% of this increase, their chronic absenteeism rate remained at 50.4% in 2023, approximately 15.1 PP above their pre-pandemic level. Their initial increase and remaining elevation were both significantly greater than the eight-group mean (both ~6 PP higher), although their adjusted

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

recovery was not statistically distinguishable from that benchmark (Table 3). They also averaged 5.8 more days absent than in 2018, the largest remaining increase across intersectional groups (Appendix Table 2). Even if they had recovered the same proportion of their initial increase as the equally weighted housing-panel average, their 2023 rate would still have been 48.7%, compared with the observed 50.4%. This illustrates how substantial absolute disadvantage can persist even when recovery differences are not statistically significant.

Research Question 3. Racial Variation in Characteristic Gaps

The gaps associated with sex, disability, FRPL eligibility, and homelessness differed across racial groups and changed over time. All four sets of race-by-characteristic interactions were jointly significant in 2018, and all four changed significantly across 2018, 2021, and 2023 after FDR adjustment (Table 4). The FRPL gap showed by far the strongest evidence on both tests ($F = 101.08$ at baseline and $F = 18.64$ for change), while the other three characteristics showed smaller but significant departures from additivity. These omnibus results establish departures from additivity without implying that every racial group's gap changed significantly.

The FRPL gap widened by 4.90 PP on average from 2018 to 2021 (Table 5). It widened significantly more than average among Black (2.16 PP) and White students (1.44 PP) and significantly less among Hispanic (−2.51 PP) and “Other race” students (−1.09 PP). From 2021 to 2023, the gap narrowed relative to the average among White (−1.74 PP) and Black students (−1.40 PP), mirroring the strong recoveries of FRPL-eligible White and Black students under Research Question 2. However, this gap widened among Hispanic (1.10 PP) and “Other race” students (2.05 PP). Over the full period, the gap grew significantly less among Hispanic students (−1.41 PP) and more among “Other race” students (.95 PP), with a marginally larger increase for Black students (.76 PP, $q < .10$). Economic disadvantage appears to have amplified the

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

pandemic-era increase most sharply among Black students, while elevated absenteeism among Hispanic students extended across FRPL classifications. The smaller Hispanic FRPL gap therefore reflected high absenteeism among eligible and noneligible students rather than a smaller attendance burden, as the corresponding rates in Figure 5 illustrate.

As shown in Table 5, the homelessness gap grew significantly more among Black students (2.83 PP) and significantly less among Hispanic students (−3.03 PP), the latter reflecting a smaller pandemic-era widening (−4.61 PP). This pattern mirrors the large and persistent increase among unhoused Black students. Homelessness nonetheless carried the largest disparity in every racial group. Gaps by disability status narrowed significantly more among Black students over the full period (−.94 PP) and widened more among “Other race” students (1.24 PP). The female-minus-male gap grew by .43 PP on average between 2018 and 2023. It widened more than average among White students during the pandemic (.47 PP) and grew significantly more among Black students over the full period (.37 PP), consistent with Black female students' rates converging on those of Black male students in Figure 3.

Discussion

This study examined how chronic absenteeism evolved across intersecting dimensions of race, sex, economic disadvantage, disability, and housing instability in Georgia. Consistent with national and multi-state evidence, chronic absenteeism roughly doubled and remained well above pre-pandemic levels through 2023 (Dee, 2024; Kirksey, 2025; Malkus, 2024a). Our contribution lies in distinguishing intersectional patterns in the magnitude of initial increases, the pace of recovery, and the burden that remained, while showing that the associations between FRPL, disability status, and homelessness and absence varied by race. These results are consistent with an intersectional understanding of inequitable access to the conditions supporting attendance,

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

rather than explanations rooted in student or family deficits (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). We organize our key takeaways around three themes.

Three Racialized Trajectories of Recovery

First, we find consistent evidence of racialized recovery profiles in Georgia. Multi-state evidence shows that Black and Hispanic students remain further from their pre-pandemic attendance levels than White students and that their recoveries, though sometimes larger in absolute terms, have not offset their larger initial increases (DiMarco, 2026; Malkus, 2025). Our findings for Black students in Georgia closely corroborate this evidence. We found that Black students experienced the largest increases, recovered at or above the average pace, and remained the most elevated. Hispanic students entered the pandemic at approximately the same rates as White students, experienced smaller increases than Black students, and then recovered comparatively little, ending nearly as elevated as Black students. Distinguishing persistence from pace thus shifts attention from asking only why minoritized groups remained above baseline to asking which school, family, and community conditions may have supported greater recovery among White students and whether these conditions were equitably available.

Georgia's pandemic-era schooling conditions provide important context for these patterns. More than half of Georgia students began 2020–21 virtually (Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, 2021), about one-third remained virtual at year's end, and the 12 districts that continued fully virtual instruction through fall 2020, including five in metro Atlanta, served disproportionately large shares of students of color and economically disadvantaged students. These patterns parallel national evidence on access to in-person schooling (Oster et al., 2021; Parolin & Lee, 2021) and associations between closures and subsequent absenteeism (Dee, 2024). Notably, the Black–White chronic absenteeism gap and Black students' adjusted deviation

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

were especially pronounced in 2020–21, though inconsistent definitions of virtual attendance and reporting requirements complicate comparisons for that year. Also, persistent disparities after schools reopened coincided with changes in staffing, school connectedness, and student mental health (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2022), which may help explain our findings.

Economic Disadvantage Is Not Race-Neutral

Prior research identifies income as a primary axis of post-pandemic absenteeism, with low-income students in Virginia and North Carolina 12 to 14 PP more likely than their peers to be chronically absent after the pandemic (Polikoff & Pardo, 2025). Our findings agree that the poverty gap widened, doubling in the adjusted models, but they also show that a single poverty gap conceals how differently economic disadvantage operated across racial groups. Of the four characteristics we examined, FRPL eligibility showed by far the strongest departure from additivity with race, both before the pandemic and in its change over time. In 2023, the FRPL gap ranged from 13 PP among White students to 7 PP among Black students and only 1 PP among Hispanic students, so the statewide gap of roughly 10 PP overstates the role of economic disadvantage for Black and Hispanic students and understates it for White students. Consistent with intersectional accounts that treat class as racialized rather than separable from race (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991), poverty matters differently for attendance by students' racial positions.

These differences extended to recovery. White FRPL-eligible students reached the highest peak of any FRPL group and then recovered 59% of their increase, falling below Black FRPL-eligible students by 2023. Black FRPL-eligible students recovered 36% of the panel's largest increase. In comparison, Hispanic FRPL-eligible students recovered only 18% of a smaller one, leaving both groups at the same remaining elevation above the panel average. Race also structured absenteeism among non-FRPL-eligible students. Hispanic students not eligible for

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

FRPL were chronically absent at 22% in 2023, closer to FRPL-eligible White students (25%) than to White students not eligible for FRPL (12%), and Black students not eligible for FRPL (20%) also remained well above their White peers. Income-only analyses would therefore misidentify where post-pandemic absenteeism is concentrated, overlooking elevated absence among Black and Hispanic students.

Two explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, may account for the compressed poverty gap among Hispanic students. First, Hispanic families face barriers to attendance that income does not capture. Immigration enforcement reduces attendance in affected communities (Dee, 2025; Kirksey & Sattin-Bajaj, 2021), and language access, family obligations, and the uneven reach of re-engagement efforts may also shape attendance across income levels (García & Weiss, 2018). Second, FRPL eligibility measures economic need imperfectly and perhaps unevenly across groups. FRPL status corresponds only loosely to family income (Domina et al., 2018; Fazlul et al., 2023), and the share of FRPL-eligible Hispanic students fell from 71% before the pandemic to 60% afterward, which may reflect changes in classification as much as in family circumstances. Under either explanation, FRPL eligibility alone is an insufficient guide to which students need support. The days-absent results add another qualification, as the Hispanic recovery shortfall was less consistent in days than in chronic absence, suggesting many Hispanic students remained just above the 10% threshold.

Administrative categories similarly shape what is visible for students in the "Other race" category. Its low average rates obscured post-pandemic rates among AIAN and NHPI students comparable to those of Black students, and nearly every "Other race" group recovered more slowly than average. This parallels Losen et al.'s (2021) evidence of notably high absenteeism

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

among AIAN students and illustrates how the categories researchers inherit from administrative data can render students at the margins of racial classification invisible (Gillborn et al., 2018).

Where Race Reorders Disadvantage

Losen et al. (2021) showed that absenteeism rises as markers of disadvantage accumulate. Our findings add a temporal dimension by showing that the ordering of disadvantage shifted post-pandemic. Before 2020, White SWD were more likely to be chronically absent than Black or Hispanic general education students, but by 2023, Black general education students exceeded them and Hispanic general education students nearly matched them. White FRPL-eligible students had the highest peak among FRPL groups, yet by 2023 they had fallen below Black FRPL-eligible students. Patterns by sex also shifted in racially specific ways. Male students were more likely to be chronically absent during the pandemic, but afterward, female students had slightly higher rates among White and Hispanic students. This gap grew more among Black students, as Black female students' rates converged on those of Black male students.

These barriers compounded most severely for Black students experiencing homelessness, who had the highest rates of any group, the largest pandemic-era increase, and a homelessness gap that widened significantly more than in other racial groups. Persistent absenteeism among students experiencing homelessness reflects the convergence of school mobility, transportation disruption, and limited access to health care and nutrition (De Gregorio et al., 2022; Erb-Downward & Watt, 2018; Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Schools and neighborhoods differ in how well they support these students (Dhaliwal, 2025), and gaps in identification mean that administrative counts likely understate the population affected (Dhaliwal et al., 2026). That half of Black students experiencing homelessness remained chronically absent three years after the initial

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

disruption suggests that existing supports, including those funded through McKinney-Vento, have not reached them at the scale their circumstances require.

The racialized dimensions of these barriers likely matter as well. Black families face disproportionate exposure to eviction and housing loss (Desmond, 2012), and Black students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline (Skiba et al., 2002), so housing instability may compound with institutional responses that treat their absences as problems of motivation rather than circumstance. Our data cannot identify discrimination directly, but the widening homelessness gap among Black students points to the need to examine whether McKinney-Vento identification, transportation, and attendance responses operate equitably across racial groups.

Directions for Future Research

As recovery from the pandemic continues to unfold, researchers tracking it should examine students' social positions jointly rather than one at a time, extending our analyses in several directions. Our two-way intersections do not capture students positioned across several dimensions at once, such as Black students experiencing both economic disadvantage and homelessness, and multilevel approaches designed for many intersectional groups or pooled multi-state data could make such analyses feasible. Future work should also disaggregate the "Other race" category, move beyond binary administrative measures of sex, and pair attendance records with better measures of economic disadvantage. Studies that link student records to district reopening timelines, re-engagement strategies, and McKinney-Vento capacity could identify which institutional conditions allowed some students' attendance to rebound while others' stalled. Qualitative work with Hispanic families, Black students experiencing homelessness, and the educators who serve them could illuminate mechanisms our data cannot.

Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

These findings have implications for research, policy, and practice. For researchers, these findings matter because the analytic choices used to describe post-pandemic absenteeism shape which students are recovering and which are being left behind. Single-axis comparisons would have missed the race-specific associations of poverty, disability, and homelessness, and intersectional rates alone could not have established that these associations depart from additivity. The choice of comparison group carries similar weight, as benchmarking every group against White students frames recovery as a uniform deficit among Black and Hispanic students. In contrast, a shared average distinguishes a larger shock among Black students from a stalled recovery among Hispanic students. It identifies White students as the group whose attendance moved farthest from the common trajectory. We hope researchers studying attendance and other post-pandemic outcomes will pair intersectional rates with formal tests of non-additivity, report results against more than one benchmark, and interpret group differences as evidence about the conditions students face rather than about students and families themselves.

Policymakers should care about these patterns because aggregate trends are how recovery is publicly judged, and in Georgia the statewide decline from the 2021 peak was concentrated among White students. A state can report steady progress on chronic absenteeism while half of Black students experiencing homelessness remain chronically absent and Hispanic students' recovery stalls across income levels. Income-based targeting carries a parallel risk, as FRPL eligibility misses elevated absenteeism among Black and Hispanic students not classified as economically disadvantaged. We hope states and districts will report and monitor recovery at the intersections of race, economic disadvantage, and housing status, direct resources toward persistent barriers rather than only aggregate rates, and strengthen identification and support systems for students experiencing homelessness, including the school support personnel who

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

help keep them connected to school (Dhaliwal, 2025). Intersectionality-based policy analysis offers one framework for this work, asking policymakers to examine how an attendance policy may produce different consequences for students positioned across multiple systems of disadvantage (Hankivsky et al., 2019). In Georgia, this could include examining whether the attendance review teams required under Senate Bill 123 reach Black students experiencing homelessness and Hispanic students across income levels.

For school and district leaders, attendance staff, and educators, these findings identify the students whom general re-engagement efforts are least likely to reach. Universal messaging and incentive campaigns are unlikely to help students whose attendance is constrained by housing instability, transportation, or family circumstances, and attendance policies that increase pressure on students and families risk compounding the inequities documented here. We hope practitioners will use their own data to ask whether supports reach the groups whose attendance has recovered least, including whether transportation and housing supports reach Black students experiencing homelessness, whether family outreach meets the needs of Hispanic communities, and whether special education and health accommodations hold when barriers overlap. Many Hispanic students appear to sit just above the chronic absence threshold, so modest, well-targeted gains in attendance could substantially reduce chronic absence among them. Our descriptive models identify where to look rather than which interventions work, and supports are best designed with affected students and families and evaluated rather than presumed effective.

References

- Annamma, S. A., Connor, D., & Ferri, B. (2013). Dis/ability critical race studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the intersections of race and dis/ability. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16(1), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.730511>
- Apugo, D. L., Castro, A. J., & Dougherty, S. A. (2023). Taught in the matrix: A review of Black girls' experiences in U.S. schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 93(4), 559–593. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543221125476>
- Attendance Works. (n.d.). *Join the challenge to cut chronic absence in half!* Retrieved October 24, 2026, from <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/the-50-chronic-absenteeism-challenge/>
- Aucejo, E. M., & Romano, T. F. (2016). Assessing the effect of school days and absences on test score performance. *Economics of Education Review*, 55, 70–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.08.007>
- Bacher-Hicks, A., Chi, O. L., & Orellana, A. (2023). Two years later: How COVID-19 has shaped the teacher workforce. *Educational Researcher*, 52(4), 219–229. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231153659>
- Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The importance of being in school: A report on absenteeism in the nation's public schools*. Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.
- Barrat, V. X., Dunn, L., Quach, A., Perrault, P., & Morales, K. L. (2025). *Still missing too much school: Chronic absenteeism in Arizona*. Helios Education Foundation; WestEd.
- Bauer, G. R., Churchill, S. M., Mahendran, M., Walwyn, C., Lizotte, D., & Villa-Rueda, A. A. (2021). Intersectionality in quantitative research: A systematic review of its emergence

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- and applications of theory and methods. *SSM – Population Health*, 14, Article 100798.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100798>
- Beaudette, P. (2014, May 30). *Mapping trends in Georgia's student population over the past ten years*. Governor's Office of Student Achievement. <https://goews.georgia.gov/mapping-trends-georgias-student-population-over-past-ten-years>
- Benjamini, Y., & Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the false discovery rate: A practical and powerful approach to multiple testing. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological)*, 57(1), 289–300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1995.tb02031.x>
- Blake, J. J., Butler, B. R., Lewis, C. W., & Darensbourg, A. (2011). Unmasking the inequitable discipline experiences of urban Black girls: Implications for urban educational stakeholders. *The Urban Review*, 43(1), 90–106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0148-8>
- Burns, D., Espinoza, D., Ondrasek, N., & Yang, M. (2021). *Students experiencing homelessness: The conditions and outcomes of homelessness among California students*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Carter Andrews, D. J., Brown, T., Castro, E., & Id-Deen, E. (2019). The impossibility of being “perfect and White”: Black girls’ racialized and gendered schooling experiences. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(6), 2531–2572.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219849392>
- Childs, J., & Lofton, R. (2021). Masking attendance: How education policy distracts from the wicked problem(s) of chronic absenteeism. *Educational Policy*, 35(2), 213–234.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904820986771>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Choi, S. Y., Graham, J., Ye, Y., & Chiang, Y. C. (2026). An examination of chronic absenteeism and youth mental health in Georgia: Before, during, and after COVID-19. *Urban Education*, 00420859261417317.
- Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142>
- Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
- COVID-19 School Data Hub. (n.d.). *Learning model data* [Data set]. Retrieved October 24, 2026, from <https://www.covidschooldatahub.com/>
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Dee, T. S. (2024). Higher chronic absenteeism threatens academic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(3), Article e2312249121. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2312249121>
- Dee, T. S. (2025). Recent immigration raids increased student absences. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 122(45), Article e2510395122. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2510395122>
- De Gregorio, S., Dhaliwal, T. K., Owens, A., & Painter, G. (2022). Timing and duration of student homelessness and educational outcomes in Los Angeles. *Educational Researcher*, 51(6), 376–386. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221091232>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Delgado, R. (2010). Rodrigo's reconsideration: Intersectionality and the future of critical race theory. *Iowa Law Review*, 96, 1247–1288.

Desmond, M. (2012). Eviction and the reproduction of urban poverty. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(1), 88–133. <https://doi.org/10.1086/666082>

Dewey, D. C., Fahle, E. M., Kane, T. J., Reardon, S. F., & Staiger, D. O. (2024). *Federal pandemic relief and academic recovery* (NBER Working Paper No. 32897). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w32897>

Dhaliwal, T. K. (2025). Promoting resilience? The role of schools and neighborhoods in supporting the success of students experiencing homelessness. *Educational Researcher*, 54(8), 472–483. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X251345807>

Dhaliwal, T. K., Lenhoff, S. W., Singer, J., Erb-Downward, J., Miller, W., Burch, B., & Bertrand, A. R. (2026). Gaps in identification, support, and outcomes for students experiencing homelessness and housing instability. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 31(3), 227–250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2026.2615310>

DiMarco, B. (2026, March 17). *Chronic absenteeism by income, English learner status, and race*. FutureEd. <https://www.future-ed.org/chronic-absenteeism-by-income-english-learner-status-and-race/>

Domina, T., Pharris-Ciurej, N., Penner, A. M., Penner, E. K., Brummet, Q., Porter, S. R., & Sanabria, T. (2018). Is free and reduced-price lunch a valid measure of educational disadvantage? *Educational Researcher*, 47(9), 539–555. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X18797609>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Edwards, E. B., Singer, J., & Lenhoff, S. W. (2023). Anti-Blackness and attendance policy implementation: Evidence from a Midwestern school district. *Educational Researcher*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221079853>
- Erb-Downward, J., & Watt, P. (2018). *Missing school, missing a home: The link between chronic absenteeism, economic instability and homelessness in Michigan*. Poverty Solutions, University of Michigan.
- Evans, C. R., Williams, D. R., Onnela, J.-P., & Subramanian, S. V. (2018). A multilevel approach to modeling health inequalities at the intersection of multiple social identities. *Social Science & Medicine*, 203, 64–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.11.011>
- Fantuzzo, J. W., LeBoeuf, W. A., Chen, C.-C., Rouse, H. L., & Culhane, D. P. (2012). The unique and combined effects of homelessness and school mobility on the educational outcomes of young children. *Educational Researcher*, 41(9), 393–402. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12468210>
- Fazlul, I., Koedel, C., & Parsons, E. (2023). Free and reduced-price meal enrollment does not measure student poverty: Evidence and policy significance. *Economics of Education Review*, 94, Article 102374. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2023.102374>
- García, E., & Weiss, E. (2018). *Student absenteeism: Who misses school and how missing school matters for performance*. Economic Policy Institute.
- Garcia, N. M., López, N., & Vélez, V. N. (2018). QuantCrit: Rectifying quantitative methods through critical race theory. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(2), 149–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1377675>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Gee, K. A. (2018). Minding the gaps in absenteeism: Disparities in absenteeism by race/ethnicity, poverty and disability. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 23(1–2), 204–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2018.1428610>
- Gee, K. A., Gottfried, M. A., Freeman, J. A., & Kim, P. (2024). Explaining disparities in absenteeism between kindergarteners with and without disabilities: A decomposition approach. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 67, 295–306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.01.002>
- Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. (2021). *COVID-19's impact on K-12 education* (Report No. 21-03). Performance Audit Division. <https://open.ga.gov/openga/report/downloadFile?rid=27408>
- Georgia Department of Education. (2018). *Redesigned College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI): Frequently asked questions*. <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Accountability/Documents/Resources%20for%20Educators/Redesigned%20CCRPI%20FAQ%20011918.pdf>
- Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. (2026, May). *2195 Pathways* [Medicaid policy manual]. <https://pamms.dhs.ga.gov/dfcs/medicaid/2195/>
- Gershenson, S., Jacknowitz, A., & Brannegan, A. (2017). Are student absences worth the worry in U.S. primary schools? *Education Finance and Policy*, 12(2), 137–165.
- Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 277–287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414557827>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Gillborn, D., Warmington, P., & Demack, S. (2018). QuantCrit: Education, policy, “Big Data” and principles for a critical race theory of statistics. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(2), 158–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1377417>
- Gottfried, M. A. (2014). Chronic absenteeism and its effects on students’ academic and socioemotional outcomes. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 19(2), 53–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2014.962696>
- Gottfried, M. A. (2019). Chronic absenteeism in the classroom context: Effects on achievement. *Urban Education*, 54(1), 3–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915618709>
- Gottfried, M. A., & Gee, K. A. (2017). Identifying the determinants of chronic absenteeism: A bioecological systems approach. *Teachers College Record*, 119(7), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900704>
- Gower, A. L., Houghtaling, L. M., Lawrence, S. E., Eadeh, H.-M., McCurdy, A. L., Rider, G. N., Russell, S. T., & Eisenberg, M. E. (2025). Risk and protective factors for school absence among youth with minoritized social identities. *Journal of School Violence*, 24(3), 329–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2025.2473470>
- Graham, J. (2026). Who Is Newly Absent? Racial Inequities in Post-Pandemic Transitions into Chronic and Severe Absence in Georgia. EdWorkingPaper No. 26-1391. *Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*.
- Graham, J., Chiang, Y. C., & Choi, S. Y. (2026). Creating welcoming schools: The role of positive climates in reducing absenteeism. *American Educational Research Journal*, 63(2), 421-465.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Graham, J., & Gidra, A. (2026). Not Too Young to Notice: The Early Emergence of Racial Disparities in Elementary Students' School Climate Perceptions. EdWorkingPaper No. 26-1416. *Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*.
- Graham, J., Grooms, A., & Childs, J. (2025). Countering racialized logics about black students and school attendance. *Educational Researcher*, 54(4), 201-212.
- Griffard, M. R., Marraccini, M. E., Barber, D., Sartain, L., & Griffin, D. C. (2025). “This is not online education. It’s disaster education”: A qualitative study of remote and hybrid school climates during COVID-19. *AERA Open*, 11.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584251338058>
- Hankivsky, O., Grace, D., Hunting, G., Giesbrecht, M., Fridkin, A., Rudrum, S., Ferlatte, O., & Clark, N. (2019). An intersectionality-based policy analysis framework: Critical reflections on a methodology for advancing equity. In O. Hankivsky & J. S. Jordan-Zachery (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of intersectionality in public policy* (pp. 133–166). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98473-5_6
- Harris, J., & Kruger, A. C. (2023). “We always tell them, but they don’t do anything about it!” Middle school Black girls’ experiences with sexual harassment at an urban middle school. *Urban Education*, 58(10), 2543–2569.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920959131>
- Harris-McCoy, K., Lee, V. C., Munna, C., & Kim, A. A. (2021). Evaluation of a test to stay strategy in transitional kindergarten through grade 12 schools—Los Angeles County, California, August 16–October 31, 2021. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(51–52), 1773–1777. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm705152e1>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Jack, R., Halloran, C., Okun, J., & Oster, E. (2023). Pandemic schooling mode and student test scores: Evidence from US school districts. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 5(2), 173–190. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aeri.20210748>
- Jones, S. E., Ethier, K. A., Hertz, M., DeGue, S., Le, V. D., Thornton, J., Lim, C., Dittus, P. J., & Geda, S. (2022). Mental health, suicidality, and connectedness among high school students during the COVID-19 pandemic—Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021. *MMWR Supplements*, 71(3), 16–21. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7103a3>
- KFF. (2026, October 16). *Status of state Medicaid expansion decisions*. <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/status-of-state-medicaid-expansion-decisions/>
- Kirksey, J. J. (2025). *Everyone is missing more school: How student attendance patterns have shifted over time*. American Enterprise Institute.
- Kirksey, J. J., & Sattin-Bajaj, C. (2021). Immigration arrests and educational impacts: Linking ICE arrests to declines in achievement, attendance, and school climate and safety in California. *AERA Open*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211039787>
- Klein, M., Sosu, E. M., & Dare, S. (2020). Mapping inequalities in school attendance: The relationship between dimensions of socioeconomic status and forms of school absence. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 118, Article 105432. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105432>
- Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). *The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools*. GLSEN.
- Kruse, K. M. (2005). *White flight: Atlanta and the making of modern conservatism*. Princeton University Press.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Kyere, E., Hong, S., & Gentle-Genitty, C. S. (2023). Mediational effect of teacher-based discrimination on academic performance: An intersectional analysis of race, gender, and income/class. *Education Sciences*, 13(4), Article 387.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040387>
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F., IV. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146819509700104>
- Lenhoff, S. W., & Singer, J. (2024). Promoting ecological approaches to educational issues: Evidence from a partnership around chronic absenteeism in Detroit. In S. W. Lenhoff, J. Singer, & M. Gottfried (Eds.), *Thinking ecologically in educational policy and research* (pp. 87–97). Routledge.
- Lewis, C. W., Butler, B. R., Bonner, F. A., III, & Joubert, M. (2010). African American male discipline patterns and school district responses resulting impact on academic achievement: Implications for urban educators and policy makers. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 1(1), 7–25.
- Losen, D. J., Martinez, P., & Shin, G. H. R. (2021). *Disabling inequity: The urgent need for race-conscious resource remedies*. The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles. <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/special-education/disabling-inequity-the-urgent-need-for-race-conscious-resource-remedies/final-Report-03-22-21-v5-corrected.pdf>
- Malkus, N. (2024a). *Long COVID for public schools: Chronic absenteeism before and after the pandemic*. American Enterprise Institute.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Malkus, N. (2024b, September 6). The latest chronic absenteeism numbers. *AEIdeas*. American Enterprise Institute. <https://www.aei.org/education/the-latest-chronic-absenteeism-numbers/>

Malkus, N. (2025). *Lingering absence in public schools: Tracking post-pandemic chronic absenteeism into 2024*. American Enterprise Institute. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED673951.pdf>

Mayhew, M. J., & Simonoff, J. S. (2015). Non-White, no more: Effect coding as an alternative to dummy coding with implications for higher education researchers. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(2), 170–175. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0019>

Morris, M. W. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.

Natapoff, A. (1995). Anatomy of a debate: Intersectionality and equality for deaf children from non-English speaking homes. *Journal of Law & Education*, 24, 271–278.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *School Pulse Panel* [Data set]. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/spp/>
O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 (2025).

Oliver, M. L., & Shapiro, T. M. (1995). *Black wealth/White wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality*. Routledge.

Onyeka-Crawford, A., Patrick, K., & Chaudhry, N. (2017). *Let her learn: Stopping school pushout for girls of color*. National Women’s Law Center.

Oster, E., Jack, R., Halloran, C., Schoof, J., McLeod, D., Yang, H., Roche, J., & Roche, D. (2021). Disparities in learning mode access among K–12 students during the COVID-19 pandemic, by race/ethnicity, geography, and grade level—United States, September

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- 2020–April 2021. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(26), 953–958.
<https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7026e2>
- Parolin, Z., & Lee, E. K. (2021). Large socio-economic, geographic and demographic disparities exist in exposure to school closures. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 5(4), 522–528.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01087-8>
- Polikoff, M., & Pardo, N. (2025). *Who’s absent from school? A two-state examination of trends in absenteeism before and after COVID-19*. American Enterprise Institute.
- Russell, B. S., Hu, Y., Horton, A. L., & Wink, M. N. (2024). Intersecting influences on disciplinary absences in K–12 education: Evidence of cumulative disadvantage. *The Urban Review*, 56(4), 584–596. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-024-00691-y>
- Santibáñez, L., & Guarino, C. M. (2021). The effects of absenteeism on academic and social-emotional outcomes: Lessons for COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, 50(6), 392–400.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X21994488>
- Scanlan, M., & Theoharis, G. (2016). Introduction to special issue—Intersectionality: Promoting social justice while navigating multiple dimensions of diversity. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 19(1), 3–5.
- Shafer, P. R., Gutiérrez, K. M., Ettinger de Cuba, S., Bovell-Ammon, A., & Raifman, J. (2022). Association of the implementation of child tax credit advance payments with food insufficiency in US households. *JAMA Network Open*, 5(1), Article e2143296.
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.43296>
- Silver, D., Rapaport, A., & Rabinovich, L. (2026). How a mixed methods approach contributed to understanding drivers of school absenteeism in the United States. *Survey Practice*, 21(S1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.29115/SP-2026-0012>

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

- Singer, J., Pogodzinski, B., Lenhoff, S. W., & Cook, W. (2021). Advancing an ecological approach to chronic absenteeism: Evidence from Detroit. *Teachers College Record*, 123(4), 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812112300406>
- Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review*, 34(4), 317–342. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021320817372>
- Smerillo, N. E., Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., & Ou, S.-R. (2018). Chronic absence, eighth-grade achievement, and high school attainment in the Chicago Longitudinal Study. *Journal of School Psychology*, 67, 163–178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2017.11.001>
- Swiderski, T., Fuller, S. C., & Bastian, K. C. (2025). Student-level attendance patterns across three post-pandemic years. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 48(1), 400–407. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737251315715>
- Toossi, S. (2024). The effect of universal free school meals on children’s food hardship. *Food Policy*, 124, 102606.
- Zuberi, T., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.). (2008). *White logic, white methods: Racism and methodology*. Rowman & Littlefield.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

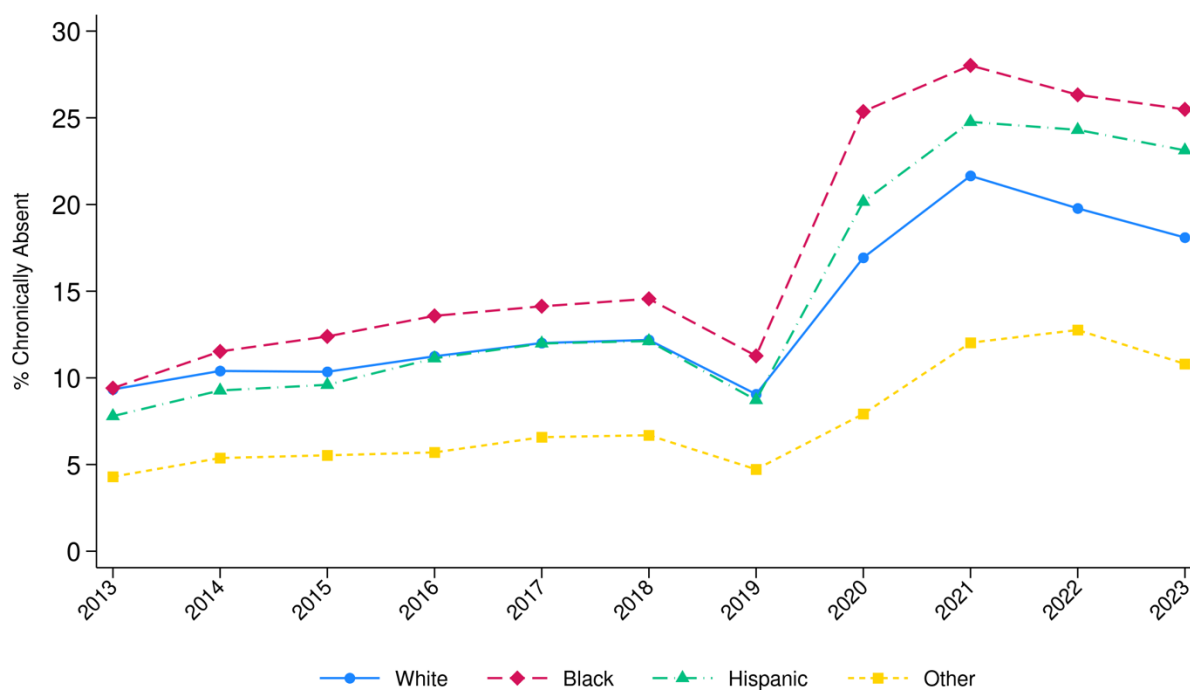
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Race and Time Period

	Pre-Pandemic	During Pandemic	Post-Pandemic
<u>All Students</u>			
Student-Year Observations	10,576,326	1,741,100	5,282,068
Black (%)	39.7	39.8	40.0
Hispanic (%)	14.9	17.2	18.5
White (%)	40.3	37.3	35.4
Other (%)	5.0	5.7	6.1
Female (%)	48.9	49.0	48.9
Disability (%)	12.4	13.4	13.9
FRPL (%)	49.1	44.8	46.3
Homeless (%)	2.1	1.8	2.2
Chronically Absent (%)	11.2	20.3	22.8
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	7.6 (9.1)	10.8 (16.3)	12.1 (13.1)
<u>Black Students</u>			
Disability (%)	13.3	14.4	15.1
FRPL (%)	59.7	50.8	56.8
Homeless (%)	3.2	2.5	3.4
Chronically Absent (%)	12.6	25.4	26.6
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	7.7 (9.5)	13.0 (19.4)	13.1 (14.2)
<u>Hispanic Students</u>			
Disability (%)	11.2	12.4	12.5
FRPL (%)	71.4	60.0	59.6
Homeless (%)	1.3	1.3	1.7
Chronically Absent (%)	10.4	20.2	24.0
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	7.5 (9.0)	10.8 (15.9)	12.6 (13.4)
<u>White Students</u>			
Disability (%)	12.6	13.8	14.4
FRPL (%)	32.6	33.7	30.8
Homeless (%)	1.5	1.4	1.5
Chronically Absent (%)	10.9	16.9	19.9
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.0 (8.9)	9.4 (12.7)	11.4 (11.9)
<u>“Other Race” Students</u>			
Disability (%)	6.5	7.1	7.5
FRPL (%)	30.8	30.3	26.1
Homeless (%)	0.5	0.4	0.5
Chronically Absent (%)	5.7	7.9	11.8
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	5.2 (6.9)	5.0 (10.1)	8.1 (9.6)

Note: Summary statistics are shown for pre- (2013-2018), during- (2020), and post-pandemic (2021-2023) school years for K-12 students in Georgia. “Other race” refers to Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

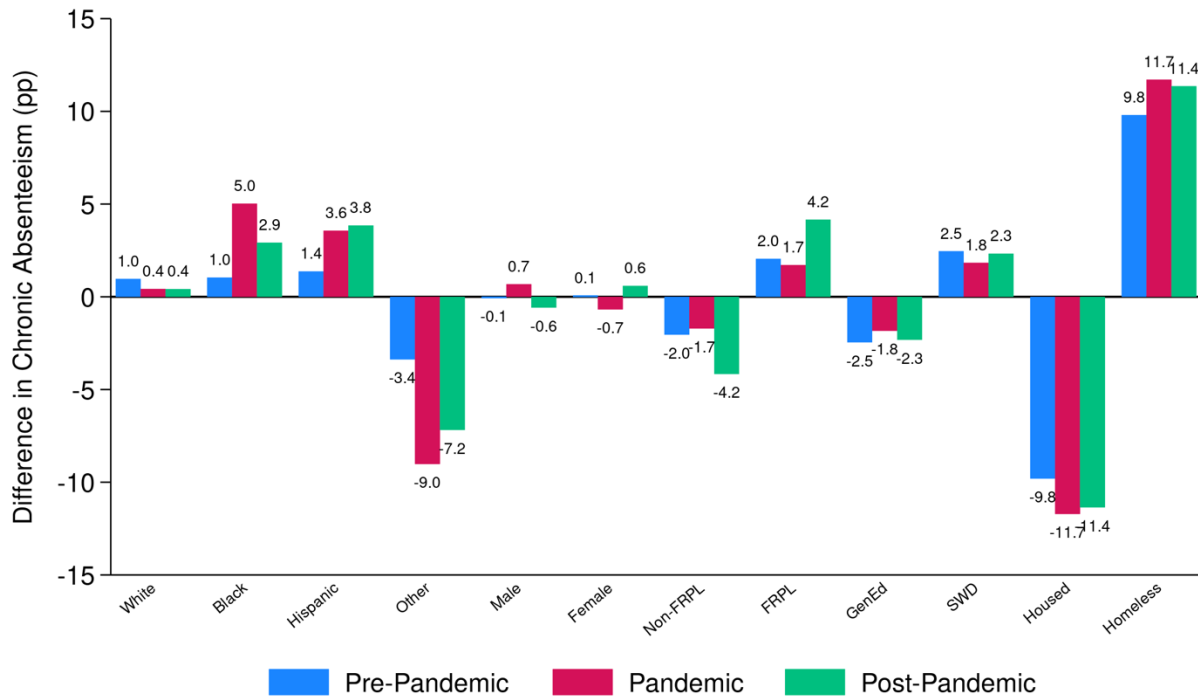
Figure 1: Absenteeism by Race Over Time



Note: Figure 1 displays the percentage of students classified as chronically absent by race/ethnicity from 2013 to 2023. Chronic absenteeism was defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

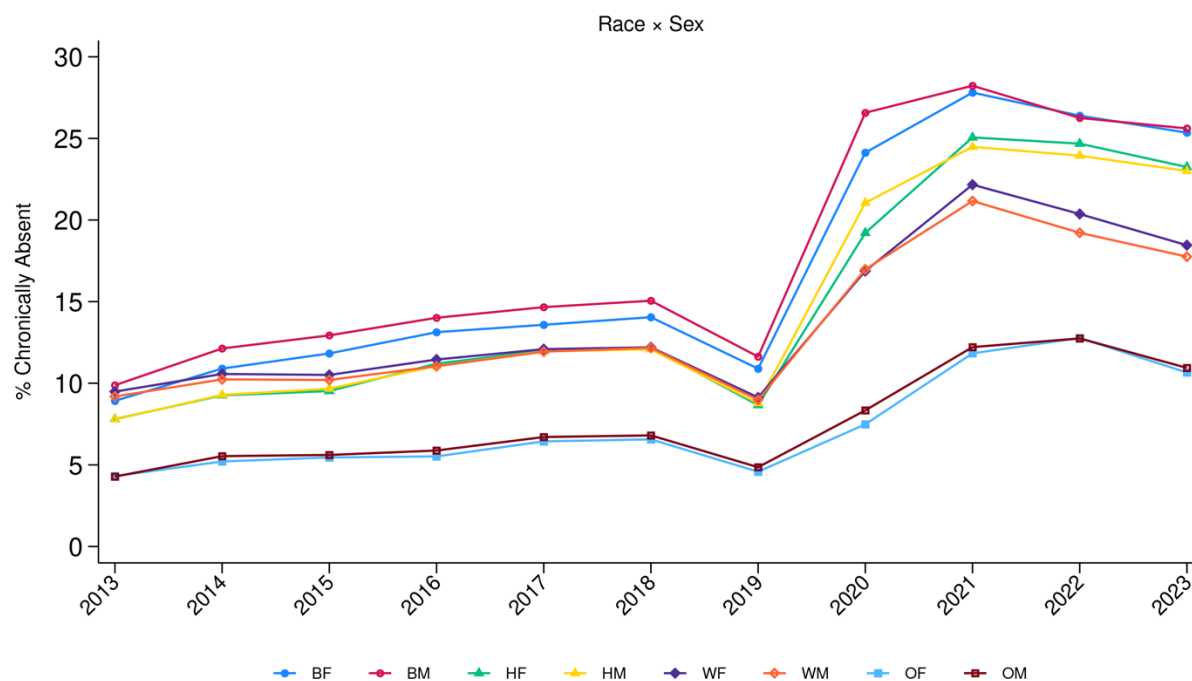
Figure 2: Differences in Chronic Absenteeism by Student Characteristics and Pandemic Period



Note. Estimates are from period-specific linear probability models predicting chronic absenteeism, adjusting for other student characteristics and grade fixed effects. Bars represent adjusted percentage-point deviations from the equally weighted mean across categories within each characteristic and period. For race, the comparison is the mean across White, Black, Hispanic, and Other students; for binary characteristics, it is the mean across the two corresponding categories. Positive values indicate higher chronic absenteeism than the respective category mean, whereas negative values indicate lower chronic absenteeism. Pre-pandemic = 2013–2018; pandemic = 2020 (2020–21 school year); post-pandemic = 2021–2023. FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch eligibility; SWD = students with disabilities; pp = percentage points.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

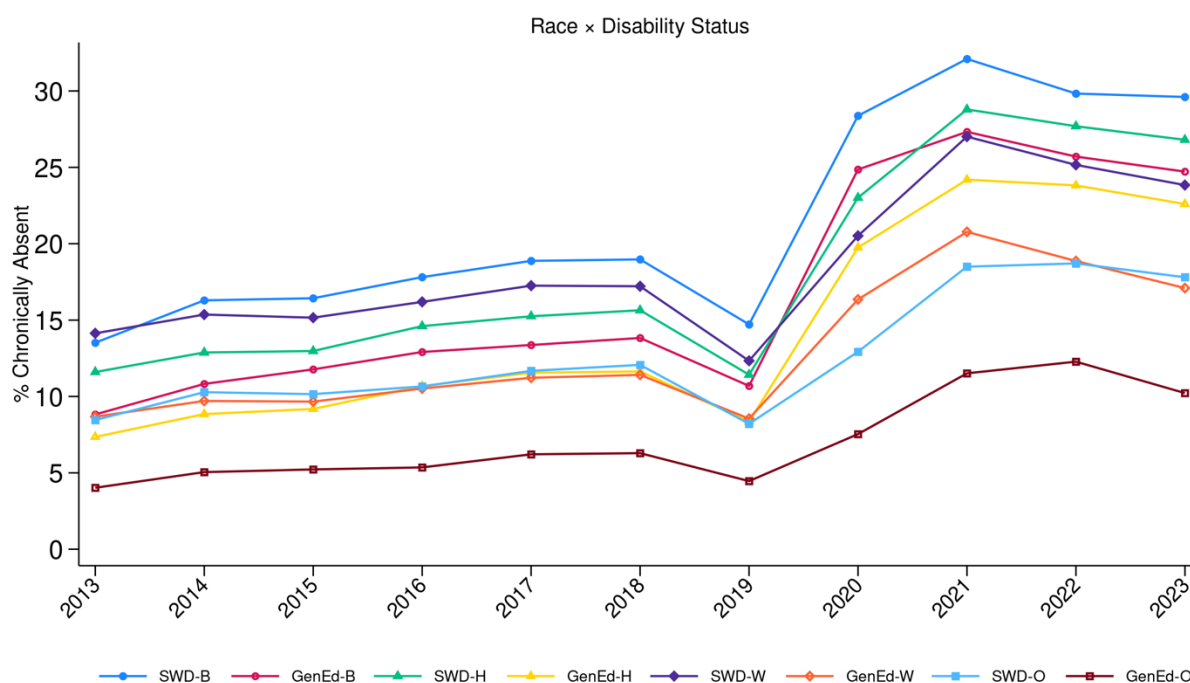
Figure 3: Absenteeism by Race and Sex



Note. Figure 3 reports the percentage of students classified as chronically absent from 2013 to 2023 by race and sex. 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

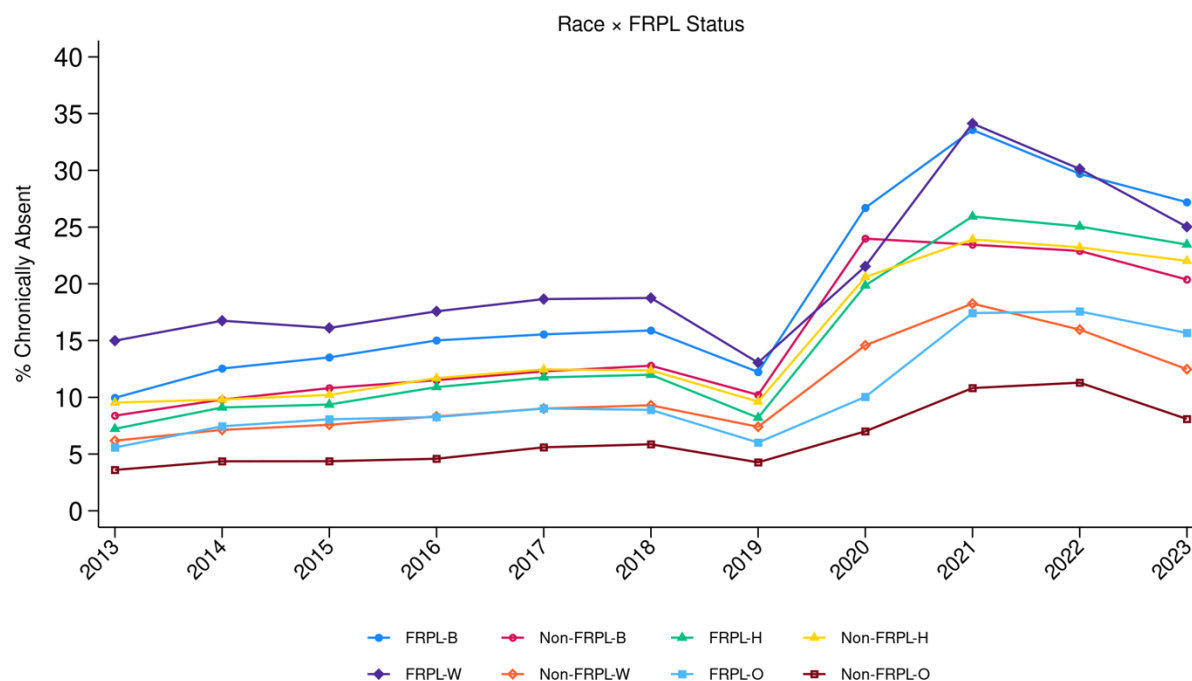
Figure 4: Absenteeism by Race and Disability



Note. Figure 4 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2013 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

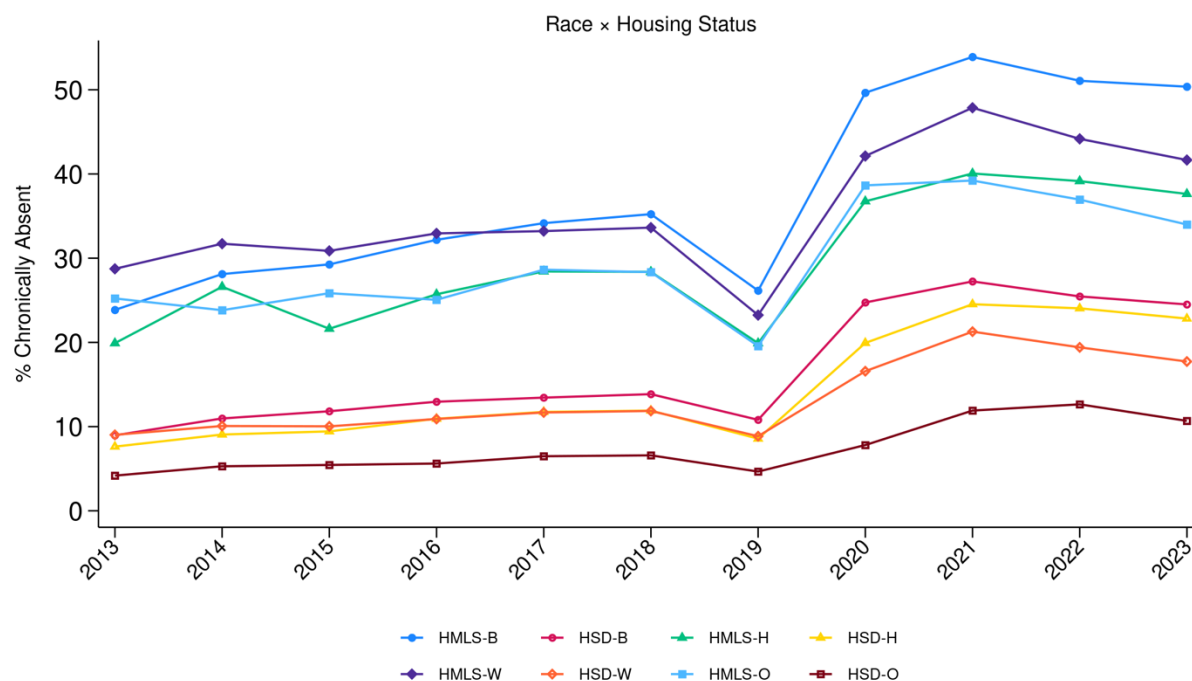
Figure 5: Absenteeism by Race and FRPL



Note. Figure 5 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2013 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 6: Absenteeism by Race and Homeless



Note. Figure 6 reports chronic absenteeism trends from 2013 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

Group	Chronic absenteeism rate			Recovery metrics			
	2018	2021	2023	PP Increase 2018–21	PP Recovered 2021–23	PP Remaining above 2018	Percent increase recovered
Panel A. Race × Sex							
White Male	12.17	21.17	17.75	9.00	3.41	5.58	37.94
White Female	12.20	22.17	18.46	9.96	3.71	6.25	37.22
Black Male	15.06	28.23	25.61	13.17	2.62	10.55	19.88
Black Female	14.05	27.81	25.36	13.76	2.45	11.31	17.83
Hispanic Male	12.08	24.49	23.00	12.41	1.48	10.93	11.94
Hispanic Female	12.17	25.06	23.25	12.89	1.81	11.08	14.06
Other Male	6.81	12.21	10.94	5.41	1.27	4.14	23.52
Other Female	6.57	11.84	10.66	5.27	1.18	4.09	22.35
Panel B. Race × Disability Status							
White Gen Ed	11.41	20.78	17.10	9.36	3.68	5.68	39.28
White SWD	17.22	27.01	23.83	9.79	3.17	6.62	32.40
Black Gen Ed	13.83	27.32	24.72	13.49	2.60	10.89	19.29
Black SWD	18.97	32.10	29.60	13.12	2.50	10.63	19.02
Hispanic Gen Ed	11.64	24.19	22.60	12.55	1.60	10.96	12.71
Hispanic SWD	15.64	28.79	26.80	13.15	1.99	11.15	15.17
Other Gen Ed	6.29	11.52	10.22	5.22	1.29	3.93	24.73
Other SWD	12.07	18.50	17.81	6.43	0.69	5.74	10.75
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility							
White Non-FRPL	9.30	18.26	12.48	8.96	5.78	3.17	64.57
White FRPL	18.76	34.14	25.03	15.37	9.11	6.26	59.25
Black Non-FRPL	12.79	23.45	20.37	10.66	3.08	7.58	28.88
Black FRPL	15.90	33.57	27.20	17.67	6.37	11.30	36.06
Hispanic Non-FRPL	12.38	23.92	22.02	11.54	1.90	9.64	16.44
Hispanic FRPL	11.99	25.94	23.47	13.95	2.47	11.47	17.72
Other Non-FRPL	5.87	10.82	8.09	4.95	2.73	2.23	55.08
Other FRPL	8.90	17.43	15.67	8.53	1.76	6.78	20.58
Panel D. Race × Housing Status							
White Housed	11.86	21.28	17.73	9.42	3.55	5.87	37.67
White Homeless	33.63	47.87	41.66	14.23	6.21	8.02	43.64
Black Housed	13.86	27.24	24.50	13.38	2.74	10.65	20.45
Black Homeless	35.23	53.90	50.37	18.67	3.53	15.13	18.92
Hispanic Housed	11.90	24.54	22.83	12.64	1.71	10.93	13.50
Hispanic Homeless	28.38	40.06	37.63	11.68	2.44	9.25	20.86
Other Housed	6.59	11.91	10.68	5.32	1.23	4.09	23.05
Other Homeless	28.34	39.22	34.00	10.88	5.22	5.66	47.99

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

	Differential increase 2018 to 2021	Differential remaining elevation in 2023	Differential recovery shortfall 2021–2023
Group	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Panel A. Race × Sex			
White Male	-1.19* (0.20)	-2.31* (0.21)	-1.12* (0.18)
White Female	-0.22 (0.22)	-1.63* (0.22)	-1.42* (0.18)
Black Male	2.93* (0.24)	2.45* (0.23)	-0.47* (0.20)
Black Female	3.55* (0.25)	3.26* (0.23)	-0.29 (0.19)
Hispanic Male	2.01* (0.21)	2.72* (0.24)	0.71* (0.21)
Hispanic Female	2.52* (0.21)	2.91* (0.24)	0.40† (0.20)
Other Male	-4.75* (0.24)	-3.73* (0.26)	1.02* (0.22)
Other Female	-4.84* (0.24)	-3.68* (0.25)	1.17* (0.22)
Panel B. Race × Disability Status			
White GenEd	-0.92* (0.23)	-2.36* (0.23)	-1.45* (0.19)
White SWD	-0.58* (0.25)	-1.48* (0.25)	-0.91* (0.24)
Black GenEd	3.20* (0.26)	2.67* (0.24)	-0.53* (0.21)
Black SWD	2.57* (0.28)	2.28* (0.26)	-0.30 (0.25)
Hispanic GenEd	2.09* (0.21)	2.64* (0.25)	0.55* (0.22)
Hispanic SWD	2.41* (0.32)	2.55* (0.33)	0.15 (0.32)
Other GenEd	-5.02* (0.24)	-4.04* (0.27)	0.98* (0.22)
Other SWD	-3.76* (0.55)	-2.26* (0.54)	1.50* (0.55)
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility			
White Non-FRPL	-2.45* (0.29)	-4.17* (0.27)	-1.72* (0.22)
White FRPL	3.89* (0.37)	-0.66† (0.37)	-4.55* (0.42)
Black Non-FRPL	-0.82* (0.32)	-0.41 (0.35)	0.41 (0.33)
Black FRPL	6.24* (0.38)	4.17* (0.28)	-2.07* (0.34)
Hispanic Non-FRPL	0.00 (0.28)	1.77* (0.28)	1.78* (0.30)
Hispanic FRPL	2.39* (0.30)	4.17* (0.27)	1.78* (0.29)
Other Non-FRPL	-6.53* (0.27)	-4.82* (0.30)	1.70* (0.28)
Other FRPL	-2.72* (0.43)	-0.06 (0.34)	2.66* (0.41)
Panel D. Race × Housing Status			
White Housed	-2.48* (0.57)	-2.71* (0.51)	-0.23 (0.52)
White Homeless	2.34* (0.97)	-0.65 (0.87)	-2.99* (0.97)
Black Housed	1.44* (0.58)	1.87* (0.52)	0.43 (0.53)
Black Homeless	6.71* (0.74)	6.32* (0.71)	-0.39 (0.71)
Hispanic Housed	0.53 (0.56)	2.03* (0.53)	1.50* (0.55)
Hispanic Homeless	-0.56 (1.28)	0.62 (1.21)	1.18 (1.03)
Other Housed	-6.53* (0.59)	-4.42* (0.56)	2.11* (0.55)
Other Homeless	-1.44 (3.05)	-3.05 (2.82)	-1.61 (3.09)

Note. Estimates come from the unweighted, effect-coded, intersectional group-by-year linear probability models for 2018, 2021, and 2023. Each panel uses the equally weighted mean across its eight intersectional groups as the comparison. Models include grade fixed effects and school-clustered standard errors. A positive (negative) recovery-shortfall estimate indicates less (more) recovery than the eight-group mean. Coefficients are in percentage points. Significance markers are based on Benjamini–Hochberg FDR-adjusted p-values computed jointly across all 96 tests.

† $q < .10$; * $q < .05$.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Table 4: Racial Differences in Chronic Absenteeism Gaps at Baseline and Over Time

Intersection	Racial Differences in 2018		Changes in Racial	
	F(3, 2366)	FDR q	Differences Over Time F(6, 2366)	FDR q
Race × Sex	23.61	< .001	3.52	.002
Race × Disability Status	15.74	< .001	4.03	< .001
Race × FRPL Eligibility	101.08	< .001	18.64	< .001
Race × Housing Status	9.10	< .001	4.69	< .001

Note. The first test evaluates departures from additivity between race and the indicated characteristic in 2018 and the second evaluates changes in these race-by-characteristic interactions across 2018, 2021, and 2023. The null hypothesis in each omnibus test is that the relevant interaction coefficients jointly equal zero. FDR q values are Benjamini–Hochberg adjusted across eight omnibus tests. Models include grade fixed effects and school-clustered standard errors (N = 5,289,796 student-year observations; 2,367 schools).

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Table 5. Race-Specific Differences in Changes in Chronic Absenteeism Gaps

Racial group	Gap change 2018–2021	Gap change 2021–2023	Net gap change 2018–2023
Panel A. Race × Sex (Female – male gap)			
Mean Across Racial Groups	+0.50 (0.10)	−0.07 (0.10)	+0.43 (0.10)
White	+0.47 (0.14)*	−0.23 (0.14)	+0.25 (0.13)
Black	+0.12 (0.14)	+0.25 (0.14)	+0.37 (0.14)*
Hispanic	+0.01 (0.17)	−0.24 (0.17)	−0.24 (0.16)
Other	−0.59 (0.21)*	+0.21 (0.21)	−0.38 (0.20)
Panel B. Race × Disability Status (SWD – GenEd gap)			
Mean Across Racial Groups	+0.32 (0.22)	+0.22 (0.21)	+0.55 (0.21)
White	+0.02 (0.26)	+0.32 (0.26)	+0.34 (0.26)
Black	−0.95 (0.28)*	+0.01 (0.26)	−0.94 (0.26)*
Hispanic	−0.01 (0.31)	−0.63 (0.32)	−0.63 (0.31)†
Other	+0.94 (0.49)	+0.30 (0.50)	+1.24 (0.47)*
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility (FRPL – non-FRPL gap)			
Mean Across Racial Groups	+4.90 (0.35)	−1.09 (0.35)	+3.81 (0.30)
White	+1.44 (0.36)*	−1.74 (0.34)*	−0.30 (0.33)
Black	+2.16 (0.40)*	−1.40 (0.38)*	+0.76 (0.37)†
Hispanic	−2.51 (0.33)*	+1.10 (0.32)*	−1.41 (0.29)*
Other	−1.09 (0.40)*	+2.05 (0.41)*	+0.95 (0.37)*
Panel D. Race × Housing Status (Homeless – housed gap)			
Mean Across Racial Groups	+3.52 (1.07)	−1.91 (1.01)	+1.62 (0.97)
White	+1.30 (1.16)	−0.85 (1.17)	+0.45 (1.05)
Black	+1.74 (1.10)	+1.09 (1.06)	+2.83 (1.00)*
Hispanic	−4.61 (1.34)*	+1.58 (1.20)	−3.03 (1.28)*
Other	+1.58 (2.65)	−1.82 (2.67)	−0.24 (2.44)

Note. The average across racial groups represents the equally weighted average change in the within-race characteristic gap across White, Black, Hispanic, and Other students. These benchmark estimates and their standard errors appear in the first row of each panel. Race-specific coefficients indicate how much each racial group's change differs from that average. All estimates are expressed in percentage points, with standard errors in parentheses. Positive race-specific coefficients indicate larger changes in the characteristic gap than the racial-group average, whereas negative coefficients indicate smaller changes. Models include grade fixed effects and school-clustered standard errors (N = 5,289,796 student-year observations; 2,367 schools). Significance indicators apply to race-specific deviations and reflect Benjamini–Hochberg false discovery rate adjustments across 48 planned contrasts.

† $q < .10$; * $q < .05$.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

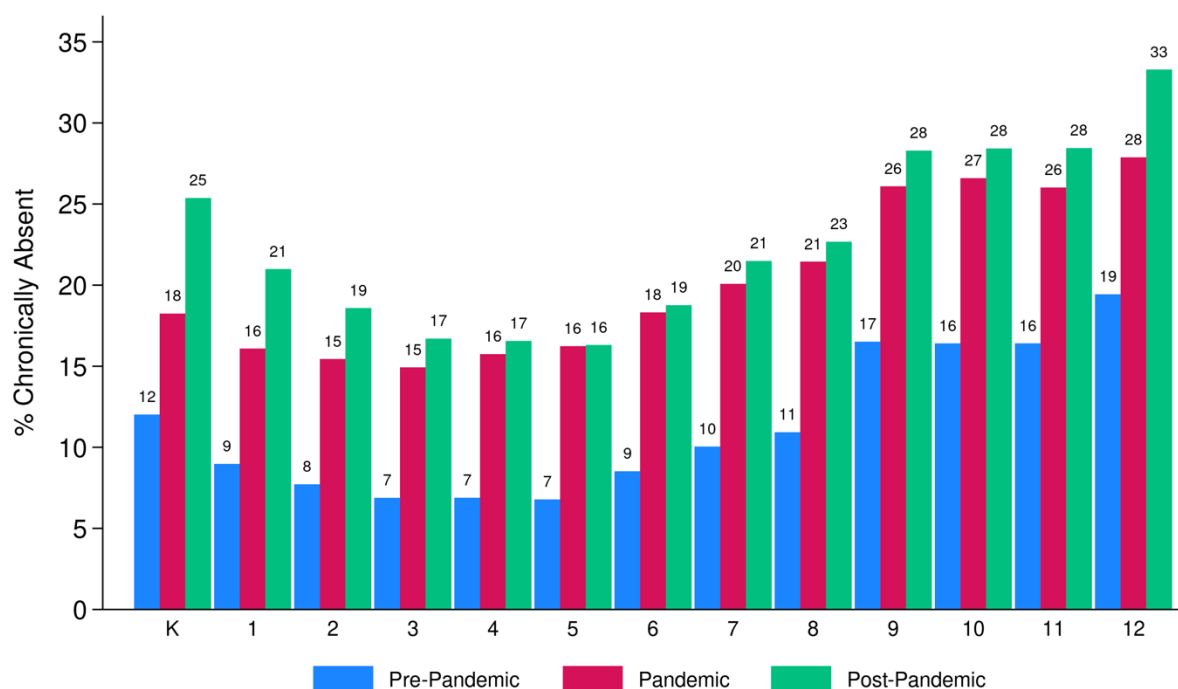
Appendix Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by “Other Race” Students and Time Period

	Pre-Pandemic	During Pandemic	Post-Pandemic
Asian Students			
Student-Year Observations	416,370	77,924	252,198
Share of Other Category (%)	78.2	78.3	78.1
Female (%)	49.0	48.8	48.6
Disability (%)	5.4	6.1	6.3
FRPL (%)	30.3	29.6	25.2
Homeless (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2
Chronically Absent (%)	4.7	6.2	10.1
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	4.7 (6.4)	4.2 (9.2)	7.4 (8.9)
American Indian/Alaska Native Students			
Student-Year Observations	21,032	3,435	11,627
Share of Other Category (%)	3.9	3.5	3.6
Female (%)	47.2	48.9	49.6
Disability (%)	12.5	14.1	14.0
FRPL (%)	49.7	45.5	49.4
Homeless (%)	2.3	2.0	3.1
Chronically Absent (%)	14.0	21.6	27.3
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	8.2 (9.6)	10.7 (16.0)	12.9 (13.8)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students			
Student-Year Observations	11,806	1,798	5,567
Share of Other Category (%)	2.2	1.8	1.7
Female (%)	49.7	49.0	48.3
Disability (%)	8.8	10.6	9.9
FRPL (%)	45.3	44.3	48.1
Homeless (%)	1.4	1.6	2.1
Chronically Absent (%)	13.1	21.3	26.3
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	7.7 (9.4)	10.4 (15.6)	12.6 (13.3)
Multiracial Students			
Student-Year Observations	83,522	16,362	53,663
Share of Other Category (%)	15.7	16.4	16.6
Female (%)	49.4	49.1	49.0
Disability (%)	9.9	10.3	11.4
FRPL (%)	26.1	28.6	23.1
Homeless (%)	1.1	0.9	1.0
Chronically Absent (%)	8.1	11.7	15.4
Days Absent (Mean, SD)	6.5 (7.7)	6.9 (11.0)	9.6 (10.6)

Note. Summary statistics are shown for pre- (2013-2018), during- (2020), and post-pandemic (2021-2023) school years for Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native Students, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students, and Multiracial Students K-12 public school students in Georgia.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

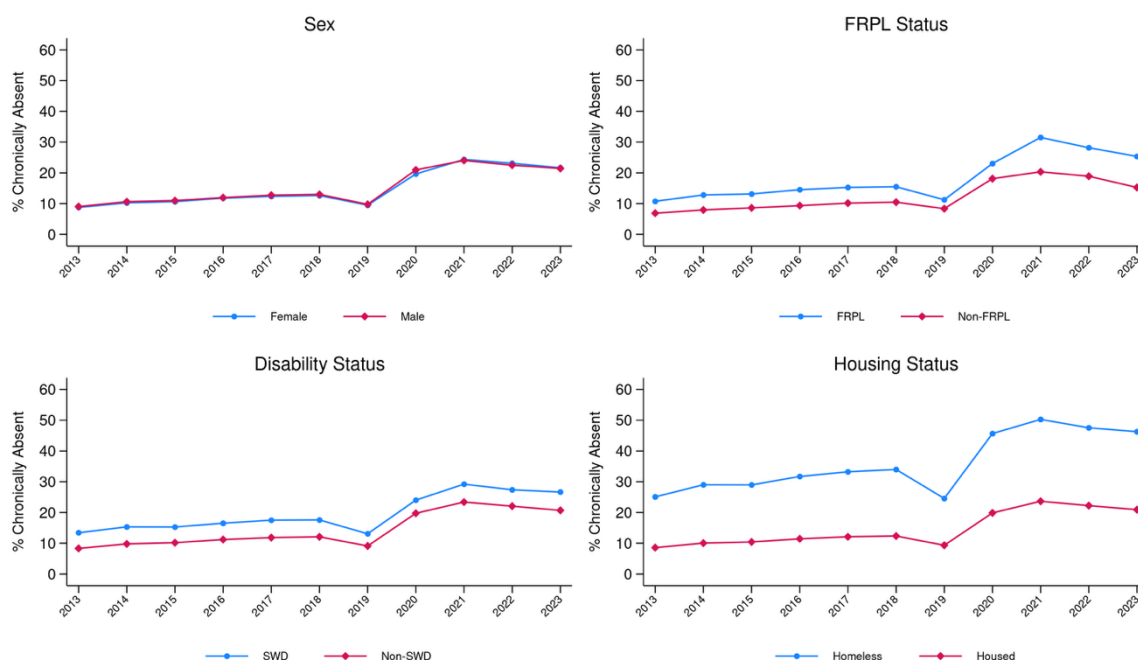
Appendix Figure 1: Chronic Absenteeism by Grade (K–12) and Covid-19 Period



Note: Appendix Figure 1 shows rates of chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the school year, for all K-12 students in Georgia across grade levels. Rates are shown for pre- (2013-2018), during- (2020), and post-pandemic (2021-2023) school years, with 2019-2020 excluded due to mid-year school closures and inconsistencies with attendance reporting.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Appendix Figure 2: Student Background Characteristics and Rates of Chronic Absence



Note. Appendix Figure 2 reports the percentage of students classified as chronically absent from 2013 to 2023 by sex, 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

Appendix Table 2: Days Absent and Recovery Metrics by Intersectional Group, 2018–2023

Group	Total Days Absent			Recovery metrics (days)			
	2018	2021	2023	Days Increase 2018–21	Days Recovered 2021–23	Days Remaining above 2018	% Days increase recovered
Panel A. Race × Sex							
White Male	8.3	11.7	10.8	3.4	0.9	2.5	26.7
White Female	8.4	12.0	11.1	3.7	0.9	2.7	25.5
Black Male	8.6	13.5	12.8	4.9	0.7	4.2	14.6
Black Female	8.3	13.4	12.8	5.1	0.7	4.5	12.8
Hispanic Male	8.1	12.7	12.2	4.5	0.4	4.1	9.3
Hispanic Female	8.2	12.9	12.3	4.7	0.6	4.1	12.7
Other Male	5.5	7.9	7.8	2.5	0.1	2.4	4.0
Other Female	5.4	7.8	7.8	2.5	0.1	2.4	2.1
Panel B. Race × Disability Status							
White Gen Ed	8.1	11.6	10.6	3.5	1.0	2.6	27.1
White SWD	10.1	13.5	12.7	3.4	0.8	2.6	23.7
Black Gen Ed	8.2	13.2	12.5	5.0	0.7	4.3	14.1
Black SWD	10.1	15.0	14.3	4.9	0.7	4.2	13.6
Hispanic Gen Ed	8.0	12.5	12.0	4.6	0.5	4.0	11.6
Hispanic SWD	9.5	14.3	14.0	4.7	0.3	4.4	7.2
Other Gen Ed	5.3	7.7	7.6	2.4	0.1	2.3	3.7
Other SWD	7.7	10.4	10.4	2.7	0.0	2.7	0.5
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility							
White Non-FRPL	7.2	10.7	9.1	3.5	1.7	1.9	47.1
White FRPL	10.9	16.0	13.2	5.1	2.7	2.3	53.8
Black Non-FRPL	7.6	11.9	10.6	4.3	1.3	3.0	30.2
Black FRPL	9.1	15.4	13.5	6.3	1.8	4.4	29.3
Hispanic Non-FRPL	7.9	12.3	11.4	4.4	0.9	3.5	20.3
Hispanic FRPL	8.3	13.4	12.5	5.1	0.9	4.2	17.1
Other Non-FRPL	5.1	7.5	6.9	2.4	0.6	1.8	23.3
Other FRPL	6.3	9.6	9.4	3.3	0.3	3.0	8.0
Panel D. Race × Housing Status							
White Housed	8.2	11.8	10.8	3.5	0.9	2.6	26.0
White Homeless	14.2	19.1	17.3	4.9	1.8	3.0	37.7
Black Housed	8.3	13.2	12.5	5.0	0.7	4.2	14.6
Black Homeless	14.1	21.5	19.9	7.4	1.6	5.8	21.7
Hispanic Housed	8.1	12.7	12.2	4.6	0.5	4.1	10.9
Hispanic Homeless	11.3	15.8	14.4	4.5	1.5	3.0	32.5
Other Housed	5.4	7.8	7.8	2.5	0.1	2.4	3.0
Other Homeless	12.3	15.4	13.9	3.1	1.5	1.6	48.9

Note. Appendix Table 2 mirrors Table 2 but swaps chronic absence for total days missed. "Increase 2018–21" = pandemic-era increase in days absent from pre-pandemic baseline to peak. "Recovered 2021–23" = decline in days absent from peak to 2023. "Remaining above 2018" = 2023 rate minus 2018 baseline rate. The "% of increase recovered" = share of the 2018–21 increase in days missed that had been recovered by 2023.

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Appendix Table 3: Differential Recovery in Chronic Absenteeism by Intersectional Group

	Differential increase 2018 to 2021	Differential remaining elevation in 2023	Differential recovery shortfall 2021–2023
Group	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Panel A. Race × Sex (reference: White Male)			
White Female	0.98* (0.14)	0.68* (0.14)	-0.30* (0.14)
Black Male	4.12* (0.37)	4.76* (0.35)	0.64* (0.30)
Black Female	4.74* (0.38)	5.57* (0.36)	0.82* (0.30)
Hispanic Male	3.20* (0.33)	5.02* (0.38)	1.82* (0.31)
Hispanic Female	3.71* (0.33)	5.22* (0.38)	1.51* (0.31)
Other Male	-3.56* (0.32)	-1.42* (0.36)	2.14* (0.31)
Other Female	-3.65* (0.31)	-1.37* (0.35)	2.28* (0.31)
Panel B. Race × Disability Status (reference: White Gen Ed)			
White SWD	0.34 (0.27)	0.89* (0.25)	0.54* (0.24)
Black Gen Ed	4.12* (0.39)	5.04* (0.36)	0.92* (0.29)
Black SWD	3.49* (0.40)	4.64* (0.36)	1.15* (0.33)
Hispanic Gen Ed	3.01* (0.33)	5.00* (0.38)	2.00* (0.30)
Hispanic SWD	3.32* (0.44)	4.92* (0.45)	1.60* (0.41)
Other Gen Ed	-4.10* (0.29)	-1.68* (0.33)	2.42* (0.28)
Other SWD	-2.84* (0.65)	0.10 (0.64)	2.95* (0.64)
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility (reference: White Non-FRPL)			
White FRPL	6.34* (0.51)	3.51* (0.47)	-2.83* (0.49)
Black Non-FRPL	1.63* (0.43)	3.76* (0.46)	2.13* (0.34)
Black FRPL	8.69* (0.56)	8.33* (0.43)	-0.36 (0.45)
Hispanic Non-FRPL	2.45* (0.38)	5.94* (0.41)	3.49* (0.36)
Hispanic FRPL	4.84* (0.49)	8.34* (0.46)	3.50* (0.42)
Other Non-FRPL	-4.08* (0.30)	-0.66† (0.34)	3.42* (0.30)
Other FRPL	-0.27 (0.60)	4.11* (0.50)	4.38* (0.55)
Panel D. Race × Housing Status (reference: White Housed)			
White Homeless	4.82* (1.06)	2.07* (0.92)	-2.75* (0.97)
Black Housed	3.92* (0.38)	4.59* (0.34)	0.66* (0.28)
Black Homeless	9.19* (0.73)	9.03* (0.71)	-0.15 (0.65)
Hispanic Housed	3.01* (0.32)	4.75* (0.36)	1.74* (0.29)
Hispanic Homeless	1.92 (1.46)	3.33* (1.34)	1.41 (1.10)
Other Housed	-4.05* (0.29)	-1.71* (0.33)	2.35* (0.27)
Other Homeless	1.04 (3.51)	-0.34 (3.22)	-1.38 (3.54)

Note. Appendix Table 3 mirrors Table 3 but uses White students as the reference group. Estimates are from saturated group-by-year linear probability models estimated separately for each group. Each model includes indicators for intersectional group, year, 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, indicating whether the group recovered significantly less than the White reference group between 2021 and 2023. Benjamini–Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) adjustment was applied jointly across all 84 nonreference comparisons.

† FDR-adjusted $q < .10$; * FDR-adjusted $q < .05$

INTERSECTIONAL TRENDS IN PANDEMIC ERA ABSENTEEISM

Appendix Table 4: Differential Recovery in Days Missed by Intersectional Group

	Differential increase 2018 to 2021	Differential remaining elevation in 2023	Differential recovery shortfall 2021–2023
Group	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Panel A. Race × Sex			
White Male	-0.47* (0.07)	-0.82* (0.07)	-0.35* (0.06)
White Female	-0.23* (0.07)	-0.59* (0.08)	-0.37* (0.06)
Black Male	1.01* (0.09)	0.81* (0.08)	-0.21* (0.07)
Black Female	1.24* (0.09)	1.10* (0.09)	-0.14† (0.08)
Hispanic Male	0.55* (0.07)	0.65* (0.10)	0.11 (0.09)
Hispanic Female	0.73* (0.08)	0.67* (0.09)	-0.06 (0.08)
Other Male	-1.42* (0.08)	-0.95* (0.09)	0.47* (0.08)
Other Female	-1.41* (0.08)	-0.87* (0.09)	0.54* (0.07)
Panel B. Race × Disability Status			
White GenEd	-0.35* (0.07)	-0.77* (0.07)	-0.43* (0.07)
White SWD	-0.48* (0.09)	-0.75* (0.09)	-0.27* (0.09)
Black GenEd	1.16* (0.10)	0.92* (0.09)	-0.24* (0.08)
Black SWD	0.92* (0.10)	0.77* (0.10)	-0.15 (0.10)
Hispanic GenEd	0.62* (0.08)	0.59* (0.10)	-0.03 (0.09)
Hispanic SWD	0.69* (0.11)	0.85* (0.13)	0.15 (0.11)
Other GenEd	-1.45* (0.08)	-0.99* (0.09)	0.46* (0.08)
Other SWD	-1.12* (0.18)	-0.62* (0.18)	0.51* (0.18)
Panel C. Race × FRPL Eligibility			
White Non-FRPL	-0.75* (0.08)	-1.18* (0.08)	-0.43* (0.09)
White FRPL	0.77* (0.17)	-0.54* (0.15)	-1.31* (0.19)
Black Non-FRPL	-0.02 (0.13)	-0.30* (0.15)	-0.28* (0.13)
Black FRPL	2.00* (0.16)	1.48* (0.10)	-0.52* (0.14)
Hispanic Non-FRPL	0.09 (0.11)	0.27* (0.12)	0.18 (0.14)
Hispanic FRPL	0.74* (0.11)	1.18* (0.10)	0.44* (0.11)
Other Non-FRPL	-1.91* (0.10)	-1.10* (0.11)	0.81* (0.12)
Other FRPL	-0.92* (0.14)	0.19 (0.12)	1.11* (0.14)
Panel D. Race × Housing Status			
White Housed	-0.86* (0.18)	-0.70* (0.18)	0.16 (0.18)
White Homeless	0.48 (0.33)	-0.31 (0.30)	-0.79* (0.31)
Black Housed	0.58* (0.19)	0.88* (0.18)	0.29 (0.18)
Black Homeless	3.01* (0.26)	2.41* (0.23)	-0.59* (0.25)
Hispanic Housed	0.14 (0.18)	0.67* (0.21)	0.53* (0.20)
Hispanic Homeless	0.00 (0.40)	-0.28 (0.37)	-0.28 (0.36)
Other Housed	-1.91* (0.19)	-0.90* (0.21)	1.01* (0.20)
Other Homeless	-1.43 (0.95)	-1.77† (0.94)	-0.33 (1.03)

Note. Appendix Table 4 mirrors Table 3 but uses total days missed as the recovery metric. Estimates are from the unweighted, effect-coded intersectional group-by-year models of total days absent, comparing each group's change with the equally weighted mean change across the eight groups in its panel. Coefficients and school-clustered standard errors are expressed in days. Positive recovery-shortfall estimates indicate fewer days recovered relative to the panel mean. Models include grade fixed effects. Benjamini–Hochberg false discovery rate adjustment was applied jointly across all 96 contrasts.

† $q < .10$; * $q < .05$.