

# Growing LAUSD: Evidence-Based Strategies for Enrollment Stabilization & Attendance Improvement

Context, Impacts, Research, and Recommendations



Committee of the Whole  
January 20, 2026

Independent Analysis Unit  
Board of Education  
Los Angeles Unified School District

# Agenda

- ▶ Context: Historical Enrollment Decline
- ▶ Impact: Decreasing revenue
- ▶ Research: Enrollment and attendance growth strategies
- ▶ Research: State policy ideas
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Key Takeaways

# Declining TK-12 Enrollment is Not New

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**43%**

Decline since 2004

**2.6%**

Average Annual  
decrease rate

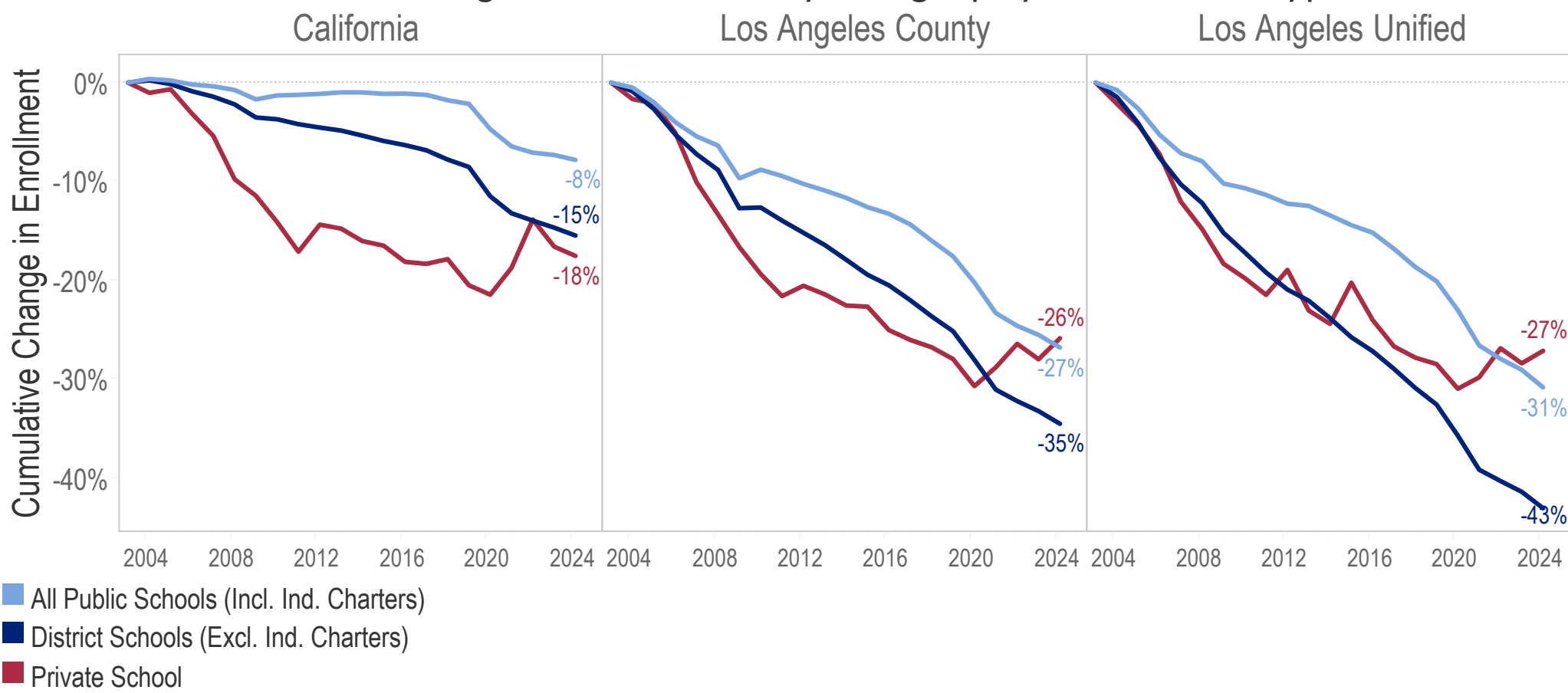
**-20,000**

projected decline  
in the next 2 years

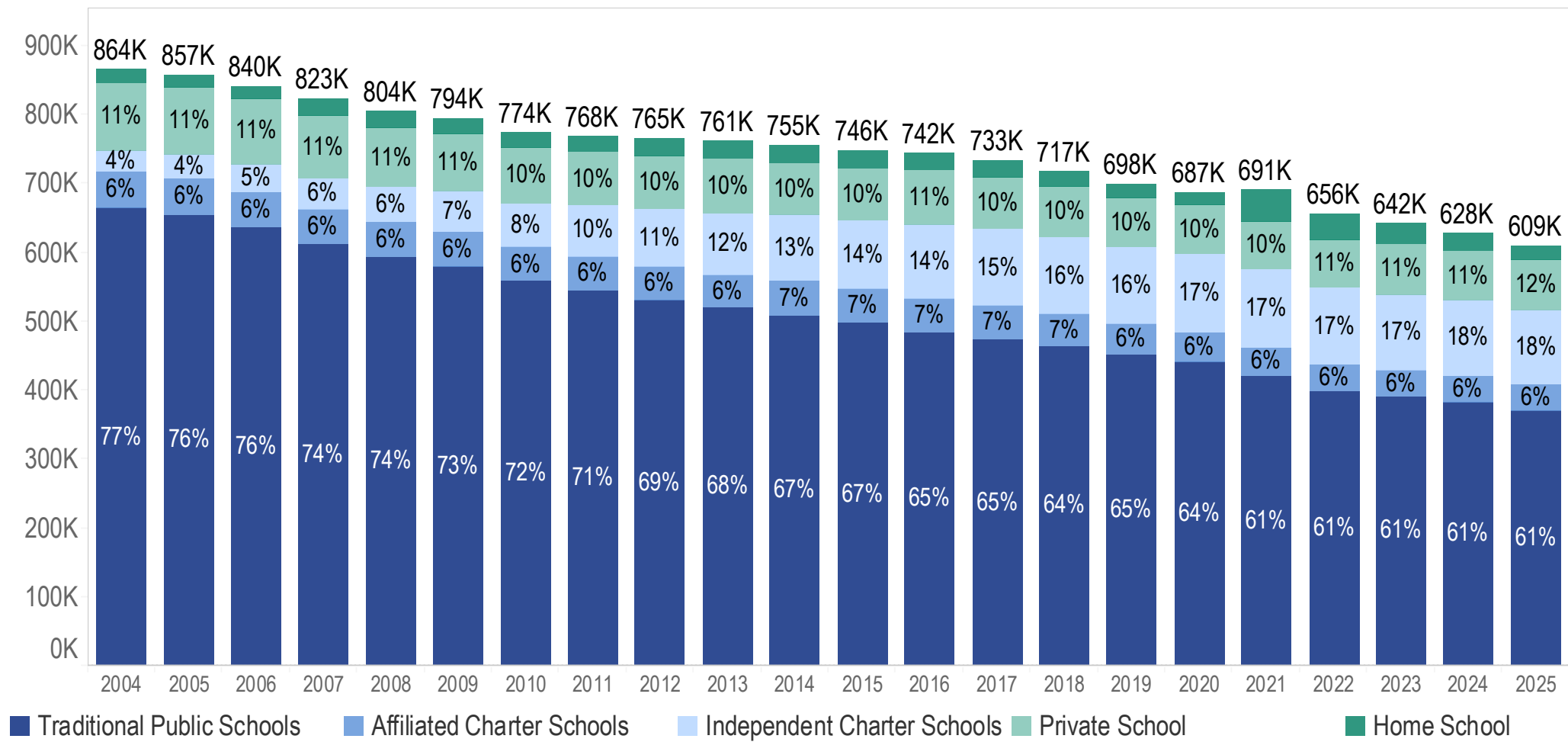
- ▶ LAUSD's decline is steeper than state and national trends
- ▶ California: 8% decline since 2004
- ▶ Nationally: enrollment in 2023 was 2% higher than 2003

# Declining TK-12 Enrollment in California

Cumulative Percent Change in Enrollment by Geography and School Type, 2004-2025



# Declining Enrollment in LAUSD Boundary



# ADA Trends with Enrollment, Impacts Funding

1

**Declining  
enrollment**

External factors  
(primary cause)  
and internal  
factors

2

**Decreasing  
ADA**

Fewer students  
plus attendance  
changes post-  
pandemic

3

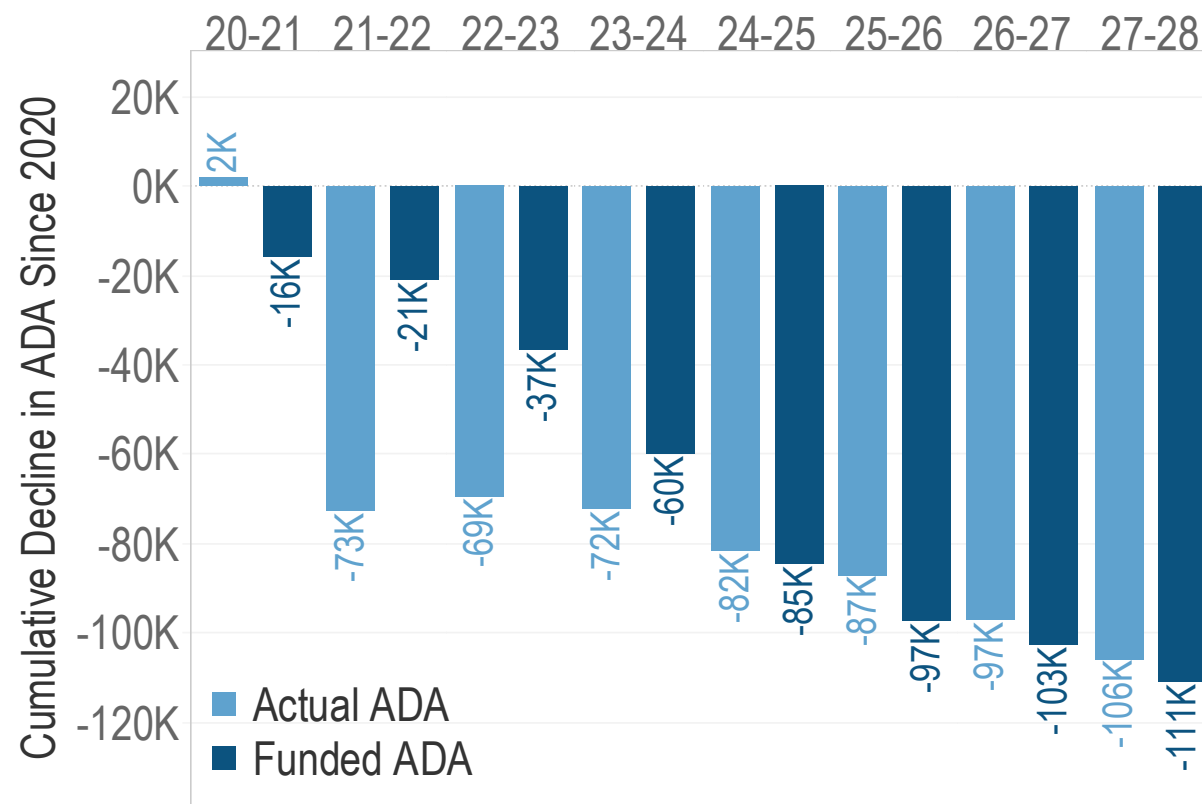
**Decreasing LCFF  
allocation**

COLA increases  
may not cover cost  
increases, UPP may  
be impacted

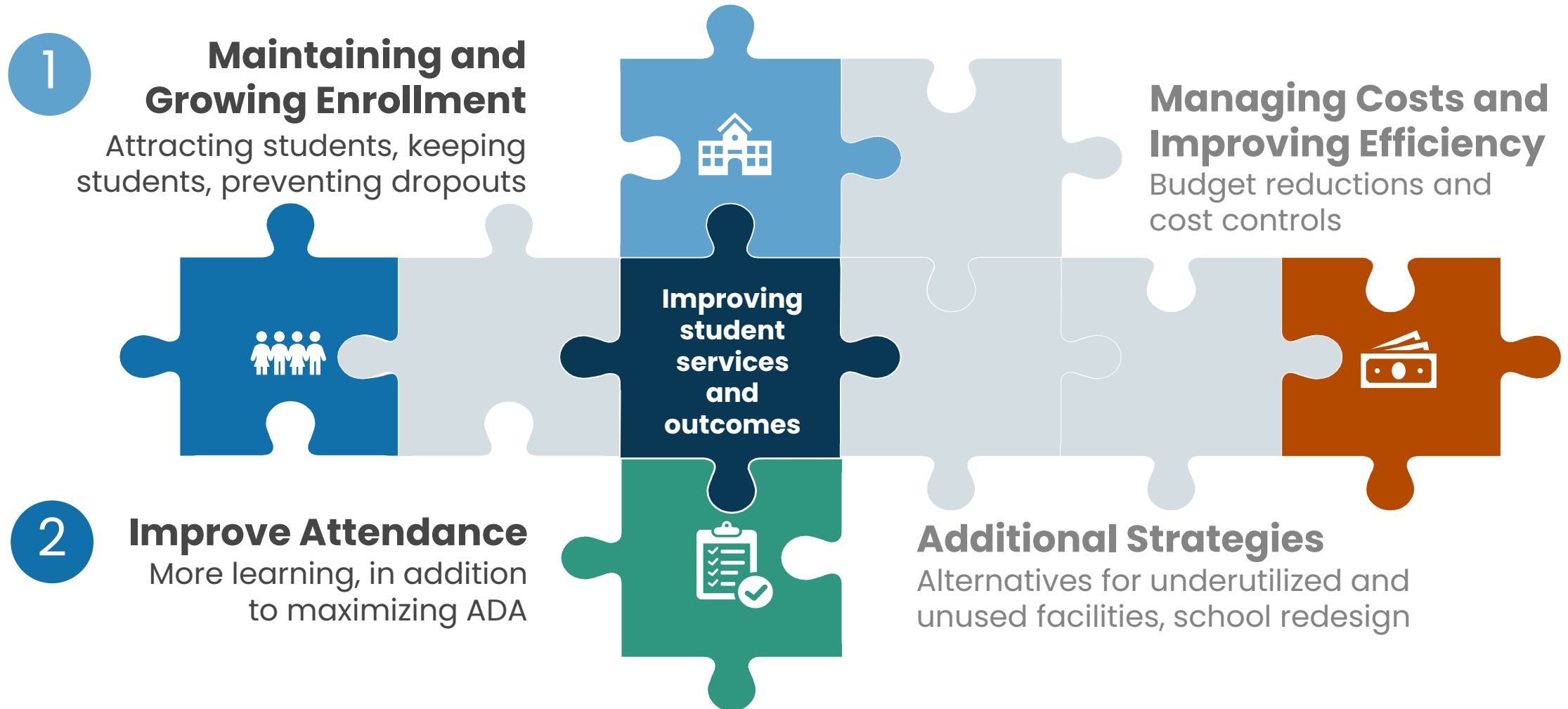
# Pandemic-Era Hold Harmless Provisions Delayed Financial Impact

- Decline in funded ADA of 4,000 is ~\$60M in lost revenues
- Most districts are improving ADA to enrollment % but still below pre-pandemic, further impacting revenues

Change in Actual and Funded ADA Since 2020



# Responses to Financial and Operational Impacts of Declining Enrollment





# From the Research: Best Practices to Grow and Maintain Enrollment, Improve Attendance

Attracting students with high quality, innovative programs	Investing in high-demand programs (DL, magnet, TK, CTE programs) to attract and retain students	Interdistrict recruitment and marketing to compete for students in the region
Increase LCFF allocation with current students by Improving attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Attendance recovery/ Saturday school (SB 153)</li><li>→ Community schools</li><li>→ Early Warning Systems (EWS) to identify students at risk of low attendance</li><li>→ Multi-tiered attendance interventions</li><li>→ Family engagement to support attendance</li><li>→ Optimizing calendar</li></ul>	
Keeping students enrolled	Dropout prevention/recovery and improved graduation rates	Supports for immigrant students and families

# From the Research: Case Studies from California Districts

## Multi-tiered attendance support



Model School Attendance Review Board (SARB) awards:  
LAUSD – iAttend, outreach, PSAs, data-driven  
Long Beach Unified – “All In” team

## Sector-Based Learning Hubs



San Francisco Unified – Mission Bay Health and Life Sciences Learning Hub

## Attendance recovery (SB 153/176)



Arcadia Unified – Absence Recovery (AR) Program – single-day independent study within 5 days of absence  
Opportunities for innovative AR solutions

# From the Research: State Policy Ideas

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- ▶ Some think-tanks and policy makers propose regulatory flexibility, especially for high school
- ▶ Other states provide financial incentives for high-demand programs

# Recommendations: Opportunities and Analyses

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## ► Opportunities

- Marketing TK to reach more eligible children
- Scaling up one-day independent study and AR/ELO-P integration
- Streamline enrollment process

## ► Time for strategic analyses

- How many students can and do specialized programs attract?
- What are the District's most effective attendance and drop-out prevention/graduation interventions?

# Key Takeaways

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- ▶ Enrollment decline is ongoing, driven by multiple factors
- ▶ Fiscal impacts of decline were delayed, but here
- ▶ Multiple strategies shown to be effective to
  - Attract students
  - Improve attendance & graduation
- ▶ State policy changes could help
- ▶ Research shows strategies can stabilize enrollment, though won't solve all challenges due to declining enrollment
- ▶ More analysis needed