

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

43%

Decline since 2004

2.6%

Average Annual
decrease rate

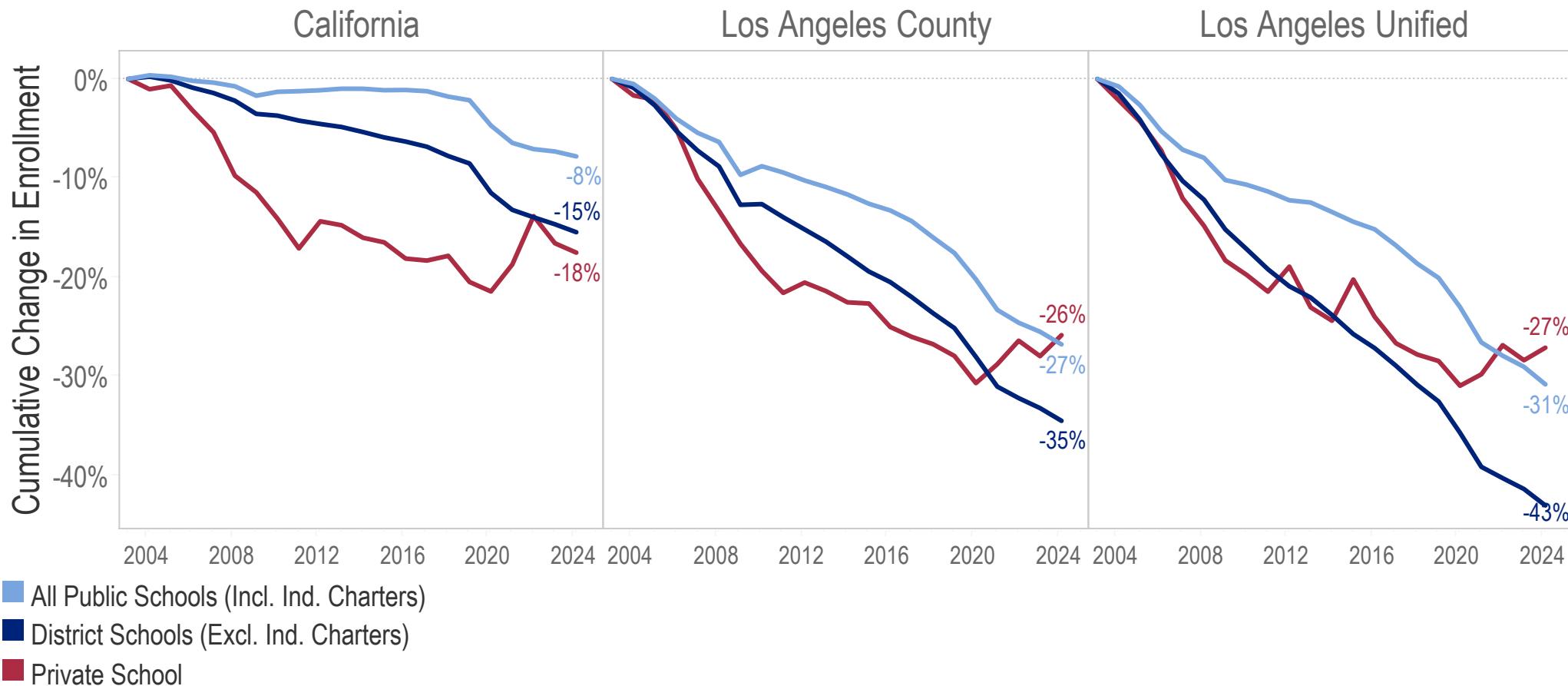
-20,000

projected decline
in the next 2 years

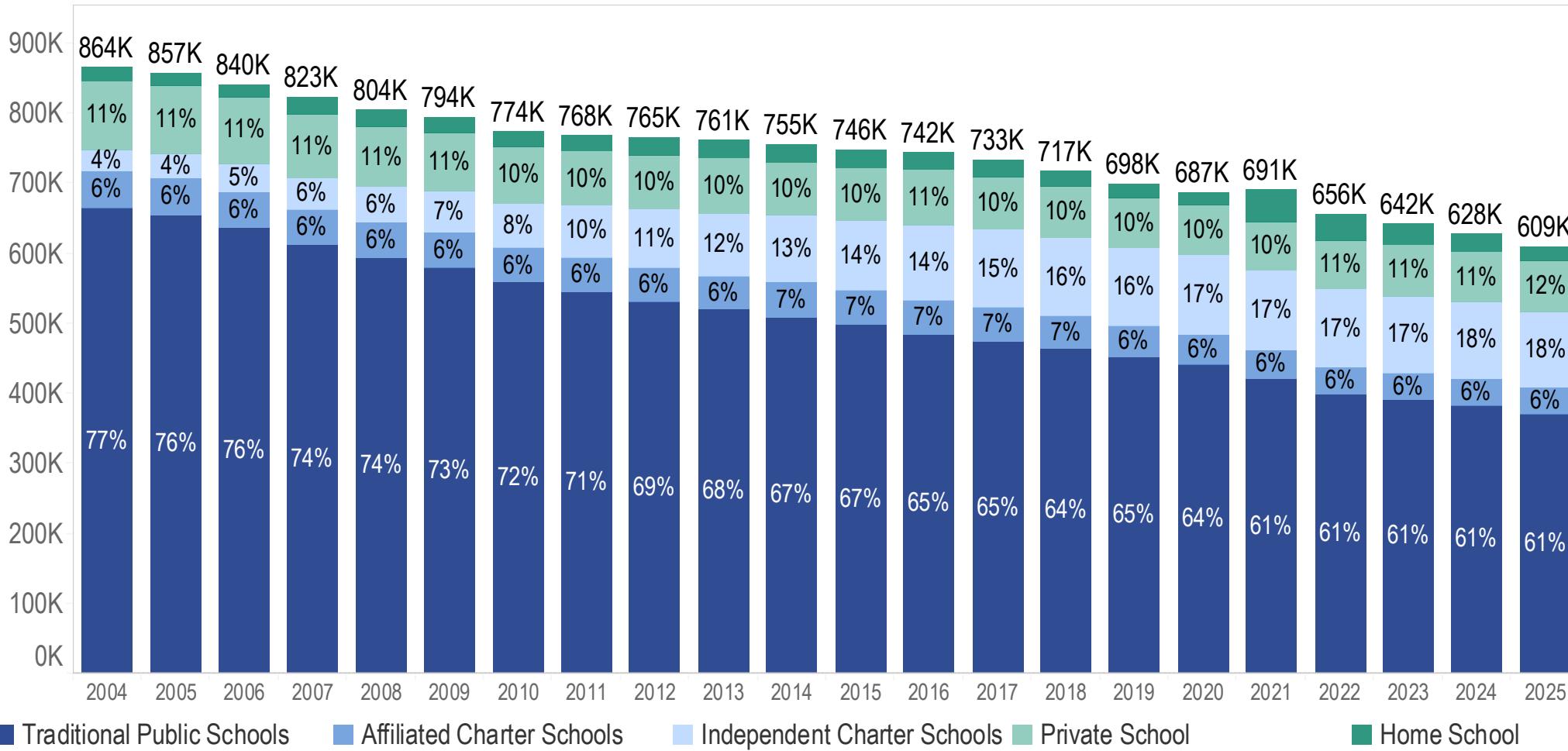
- ▶ LAUSD's decline is steeper than state and national trends
- ▶ California: 8% decline since 2004
- ▶ Nationally: enrollment in 2023 was 2% higher than 2003

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

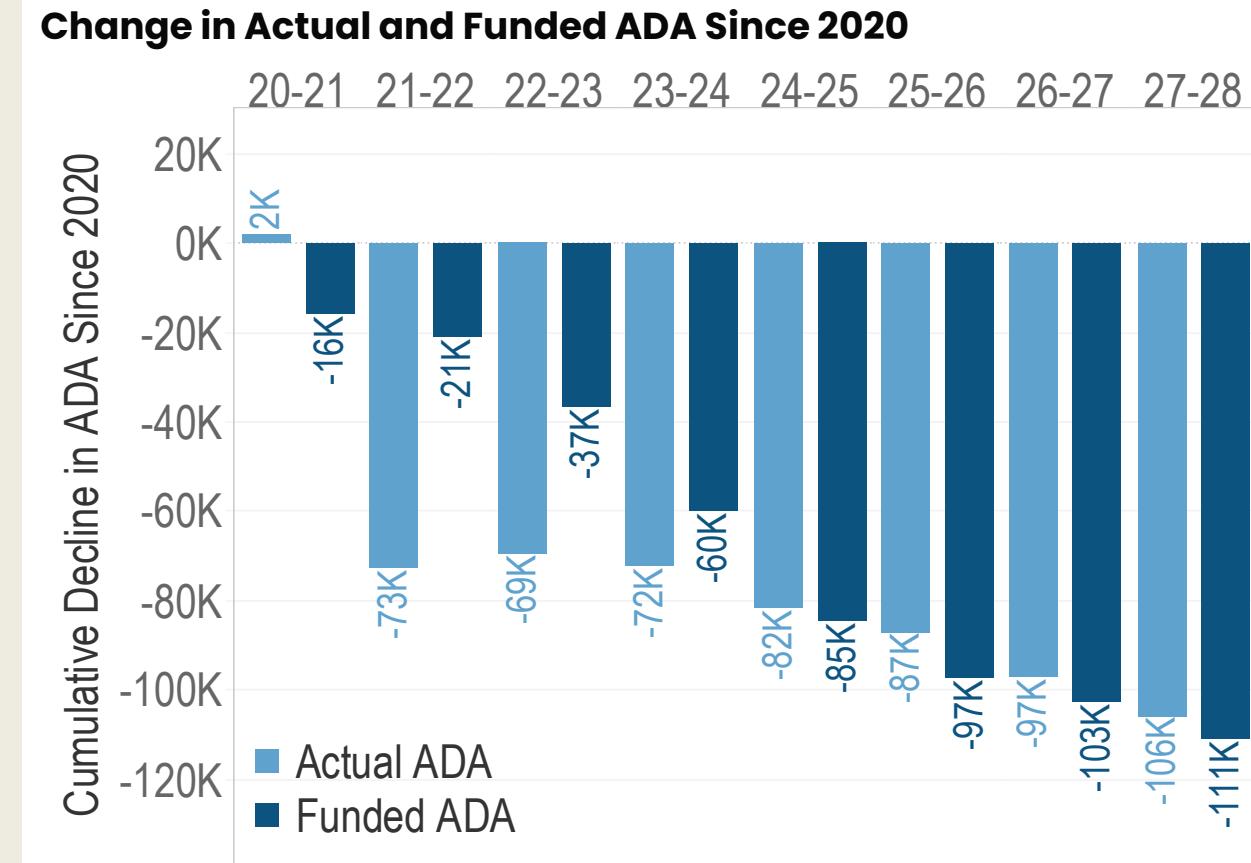
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Decreasing LCFF allocation

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



Responses to Financial and Operational Impacts of Declining Enrollment

1

Maintaining and Growing Enrollment

Attracting students, keeping students, preventing dropouts



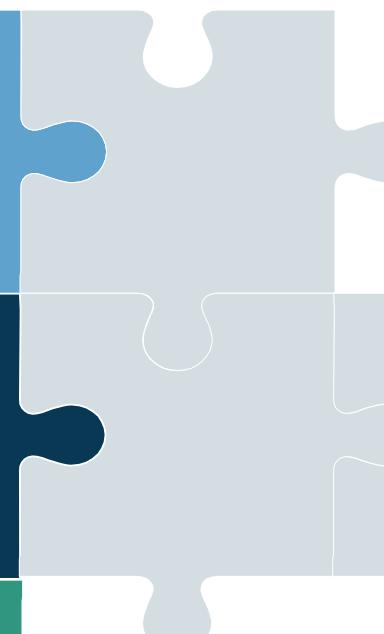
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Improve Attendance

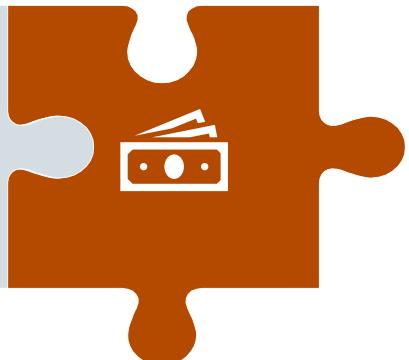
More learning, in addition to maximizing ADA



Improving student services and outcomes



Managing Costs and Improving Efficiency
Budget reductions and cost controls



Additional Strategies

Alternatives for underutilized and unused facilities, school redesign

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

- **Attendance recovery/ Saturday school (SB 153)**
- Community schools
- Early Warning Systems (EWS) to identify students at risk of low attendance

- Multi-tiered attendance interventions
- Family engagement to support attendance
- Optimizing calendar

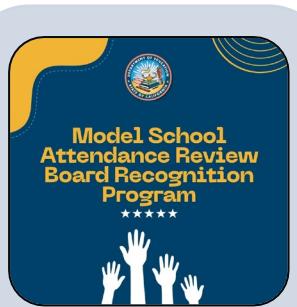
Keeping students enrolled

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

- ▶ 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

► 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

- ▶ 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