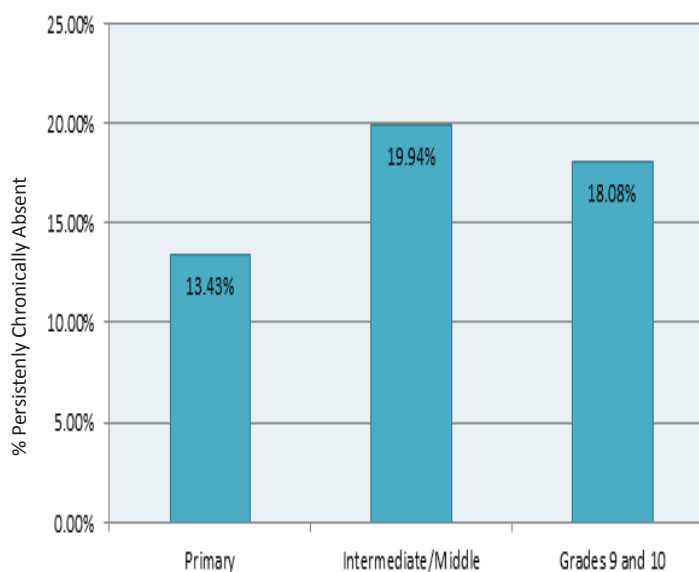


Poor school attendance is associated with lower levels of academic learning, disconnection from peers, teachers and schools, poor health, high school non-completion, incarceration and future unemployment.<sup>1</sup> Chronic absence—missing at least 10% of school—is an important benchmark of poor attendance. From 2010-2011 through 2012-2013, over 1 in 10 SCUSD students were chronically absent each academic year. During this period of time 703 students, or 13.96% of the chronically absent population during 2010-2011, were chronically absent for all three years. This brief identifies characteristics of these students who were persistently chronically absent. While these findings do not identify the cause of persistent chronic absence, they can inform outreach to this high-need population.

### Persistent chronic absence varied by grade-level

Analyzing persistent chronic absence over the three years for three grade-level cohorts revealed different patterns among primary grade students (K-3rd grade), intermediate and middle school students (4th-8th grade), and high school students (9th-12th grade).

Figure 1: Percentage of Chronically Absent Students in 2010-2011 Who Were Persistently Chronically Absent



Of the primary grade students who were chronically absent during the 2010-2011 school year, over the next two years:

- 49.79% were not chronically absent
- 13.43% (222 students) continued to be chronically absent
- 36.78% (608 students) left the district.

Of the intermediate and middle school students who were chronically absent during the 2010-2011 school year, over the next two years:

- 67.15% were not chronically absent
- 19.94% (308 students) continued to be chronically absent,
- 42.91% (663 students) left the district.

Of the 9th and 10th grade high school students who were chronically absent during the 2010-2011 school year, over the next two years:

- 21.94% were not chronically absent
- 18.08% (149 students) continued to be chronically absent
- 58.98% (486 students) left the district.

The high rate at which 2010-2011 chronically absent students dis-enrolled from SCUSD raises questions about why this was the case. The particularly high percentage of

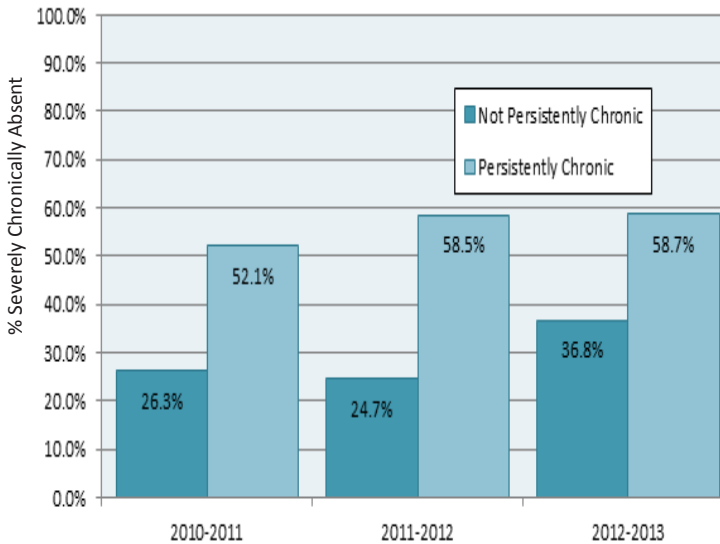
chronically absent high school students that left the school district suggests some of portion of this cohort likely did not complete high school.

### Characteristics of persistent chronic absentees

We hypothesized that students who were chronically absent over several years were more likely to have missed especially large amounts of school, contended with economic poverty, and experienced high levels of residential and/or school instability. Student record data revealed this to be true.

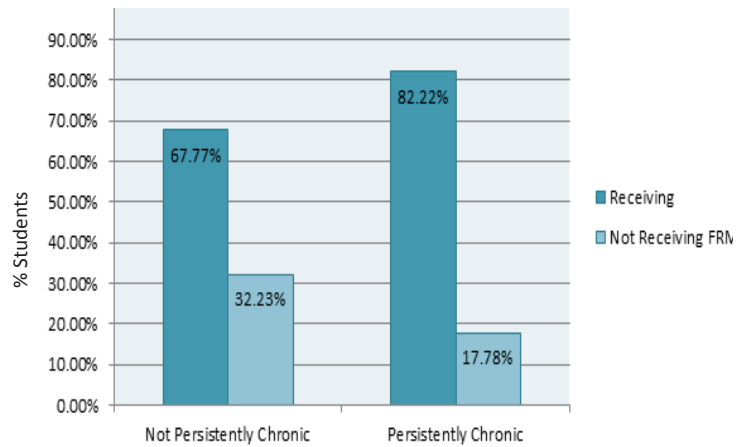
- Each year, persistent chronic absentees were more likely than expected to meet the threshold for “severe chronic absence:” missing at least 15% of school.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2: Percentage of Persistent Chronic and Not Persistent Chronic Absentees Who Were Severely Chronically Absent by Year



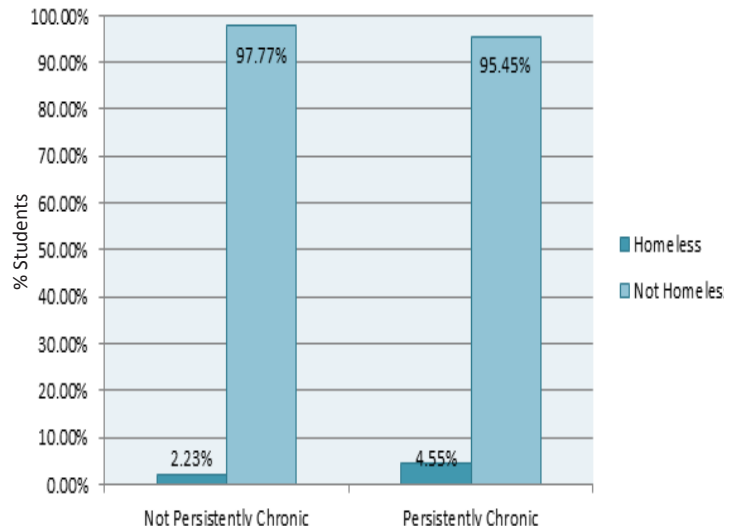
- One indicator of low family income is receiving free/reduced-price meals (FRM). Students who were persistently chronically absent were more likely than expected to have received free or reduced-price school meals during the 2010-2011 school year (see Figure 3).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 3: Proportion of Not Persistently Chronic and Persistently Chronic Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Priced Meals (FRM)



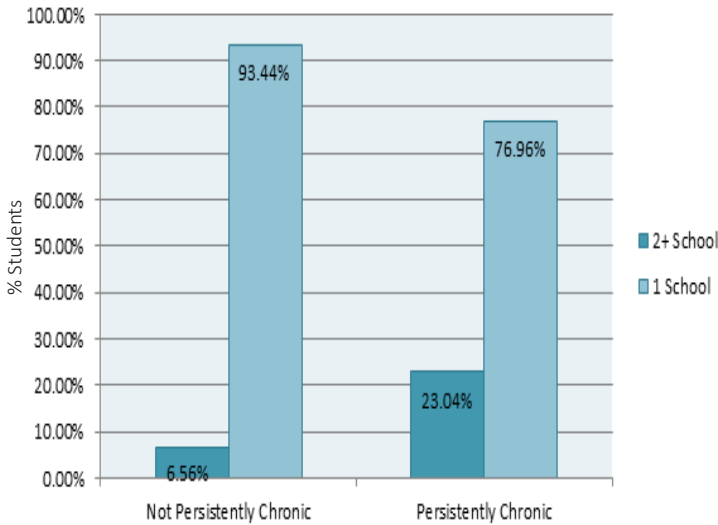
- Persistent chronic absentees were more likely than expected to be homeless during the 2010-2011 school year (see Figure 4).<sup>4</sup>

Figure 4: Proportion of Not Persistently Chronic and Persistently chronic students Classified as Homeless



- Persistently chronically absent students were more likely than expected to attend two or more schools during the 2010-2011 school year (see Figure 5).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 5: Proportion of Not Persistently Chronic and Persistently Chronic Students Who Attended One or More Schools



### Schools Serving Persistent Chronic Absentees

Almost all schools in SCUSD enrolled persistent chronic absentees from 2010-2013. However, several schools were more likely than expected to serve these students. The following table lists these schools, along with the percentage of students within the school who were persistently chronically absent each year. Assuming approximately 33 students per classroom, these persistent chronic absence rates suggest that at each school at least one student per classroom is a persistent chronic absentee.<sup>6</sup>

School Name	2010-2011 (% of all students)	2011-2012 (% of all students)	2012-2013 (% of all students)
Albert Einstein MS	3.9%	n.s.	n.s.
American Legion HS	62.8%	48.5%	38.8%
Bret Harte ES	4.8%	4.8%	6.1%
Ethel I Baker ES	4.3%	4.5%	n.s.
Father Keith B Kenny ES	5.7%	6.1%	n.s.
Fruit Ridge ES	4.8%	5.0%	n.s.
Health Professions HS	n.s.	n.s.	4.8%
Hiram Johnson HS	4.6%	4.0%	3.7%
John Cabrillo ES	n.s.	4.8%	5.2%
John H. Still K-8	5.3%	n.s.	4.1%
Luther Burbank HS	4.6%	4.7%	4.1%
Oak Ridge ES	4.9%	5.1%	5.6%
Parkway ES	4.1%	5.1%	n.s.

n.s.: no statistically significantly overrepresentation of persistent chronic absentees

### Conclusion

Students who remained chronically absent from 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 especially large amounts of school, contended with economic poverty, and experienced high levels of residential and school instability. Breaking this cycle will require targeted investing in inquiry regarding persistent chronic absentees’ school attendance barriers, interventions to support their attendance, and follow-up to ensure intervention strategy effectiveness.

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#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> See Brief #2: The Cost of Chronic Absence in the Sacramento City Unified School District Chronic Absence Issue Brief Series at [regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/chronic-absence-in-the-sacramento-unified-school-district](http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/chronic-absence-in-the-sacramento-unified-school-district)

<sup>2</sup> 2010-2011:  $\chi^2(1) = 144.40, p < .001$ ; 2011-2012:  $\chi^2(1) = 257.78, p < .001$ ; 2012-2013:  $\chi^2(1) = 101.13, p < .001$

<sup>3</sup>  $\chi^2(1) = 65.90, p < .001$

<sup>4</sup>  $\chi^2(1) = 16.52, p < .001$

<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2(1) = 287.42, p < .001$

<sup>6</sup> 2010-2011:  $\chi^2(81) = 937.10, p < .001$ ; 2011-2012:  $\chi^2(77) = 1123.93, p < .001$ ; 2012-2013:  $\chi^2(75) = 1337.09, p < .001$