

Attendance Research





What Happens When Children Miss School? Unpacking Elementary School Absences in MMSD

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Research questions

- How do **patterns of school attendance** vary among elementary school students in MMSD?
- How is attendance related to **student achievement and achievement growth**?
- What are the **equity** implications of eliminating difference among student in school attendance?



What did we do?

- Statistical analyses of MMSD data
- Students in **kindergarten through third grade**
 - 2012-13 through 2016-17
- Distinguish between **excused** and **unexcused** absences
- Consider how **attendance is related** to:
 - **Literacy and math**: PALS (K-2), MAP (3), and report card grades
 - **Socioemotional skills**: report cards grades (K-3)

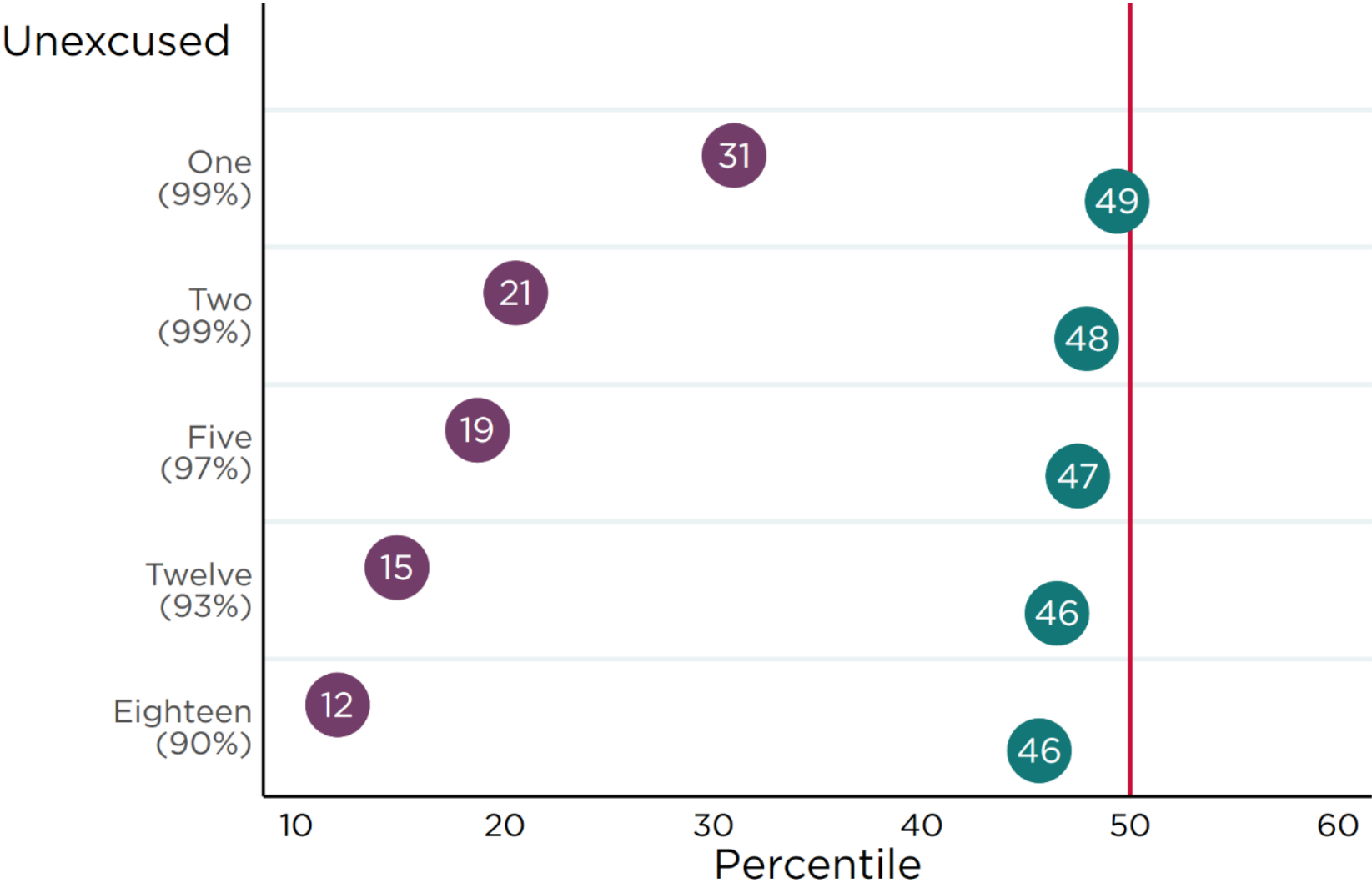


Patterns of attendance

- Each year:
 - 98% of students have an excused absence
 - 50% of students have an unexcused absence
- Low income students and African American students:
 - Are about 24 percentage points more likely than white students and non-disadvantaged students to have an unexcused absence
 - Typically have 1-2 more unexcused absences if they have any

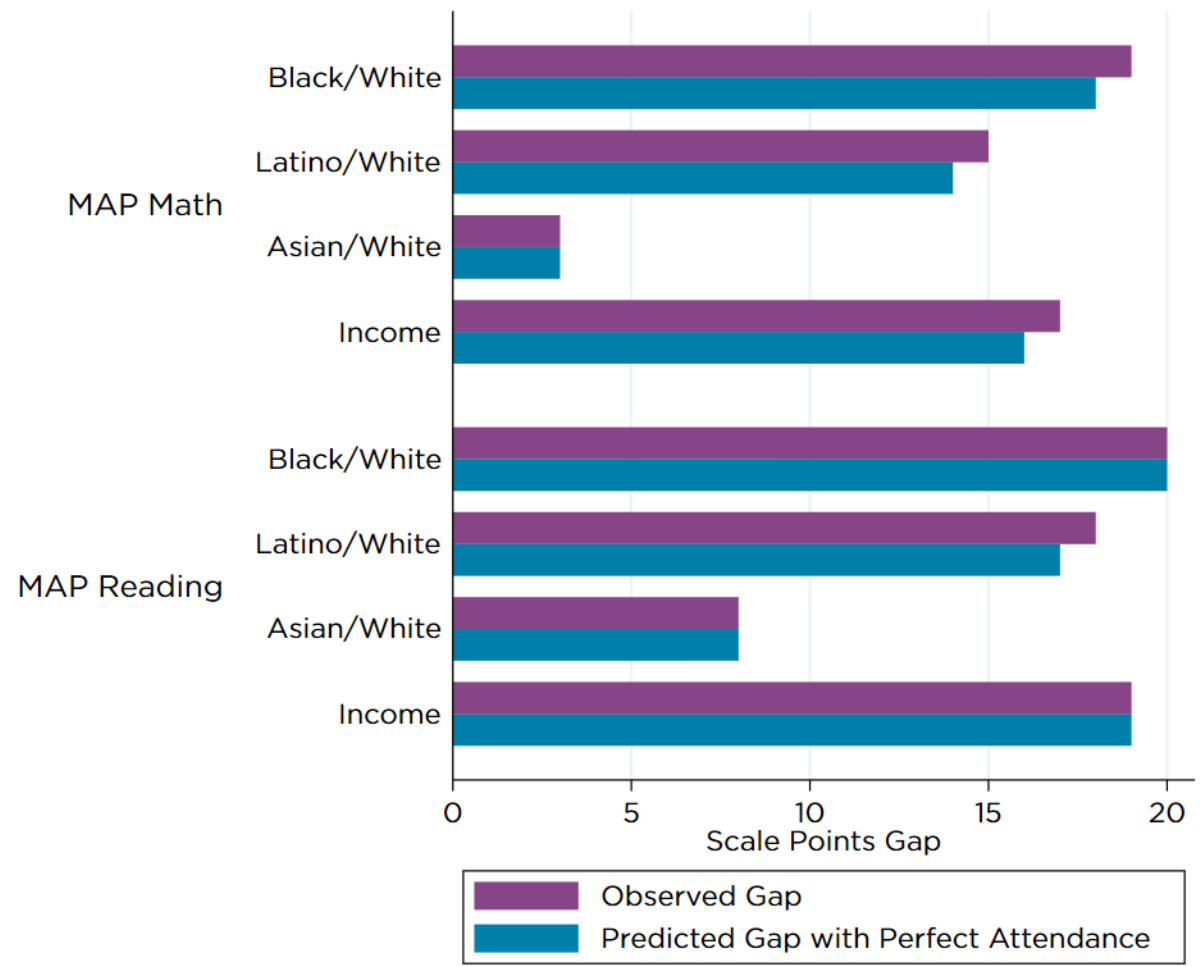
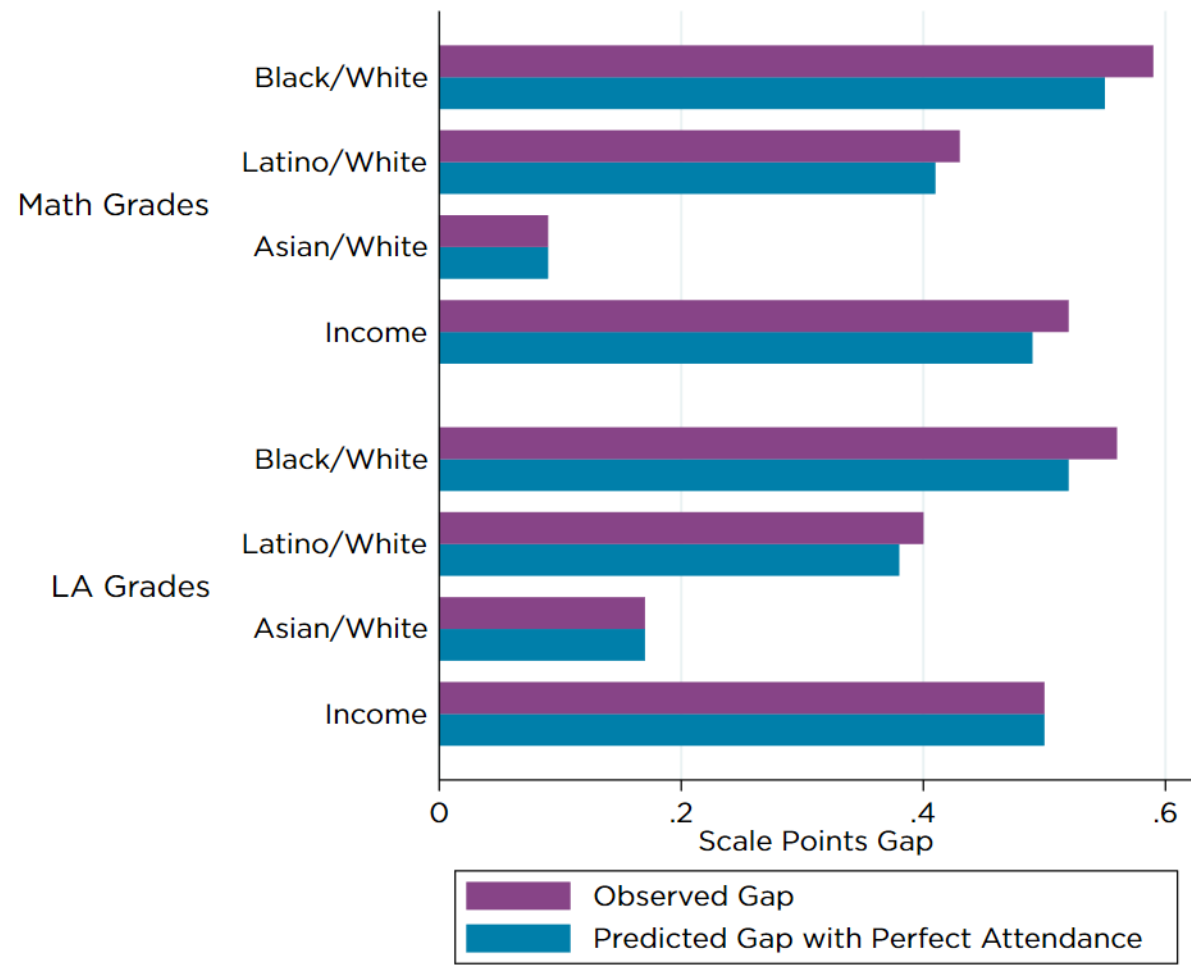


Unexcused absences and MAP math scores





Attendance and Inequality





What did we learn?

- The number of **excused and unexcused absences** varies widely among students, in part as a **function of family income and race/ethnicity**.
- Attendance has **little bearing on student growth** in reading and literacy between kindergarten and third grade and a **modest association with growth** in mathematics.
- **Unexcused absences** appear to be more of a **signal of other challenges** students may face than a cause of inequalities in academic achievement
- **Reducing disparities in attendance** would **do little** to reduce disparities in achievement