QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

Crime

Traffic

Quality of Education
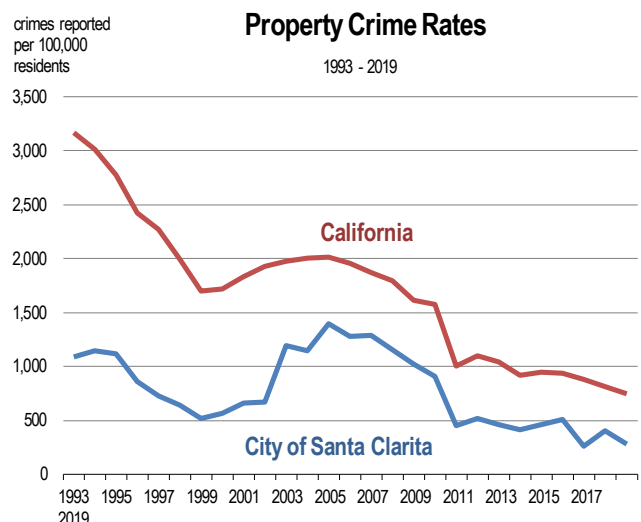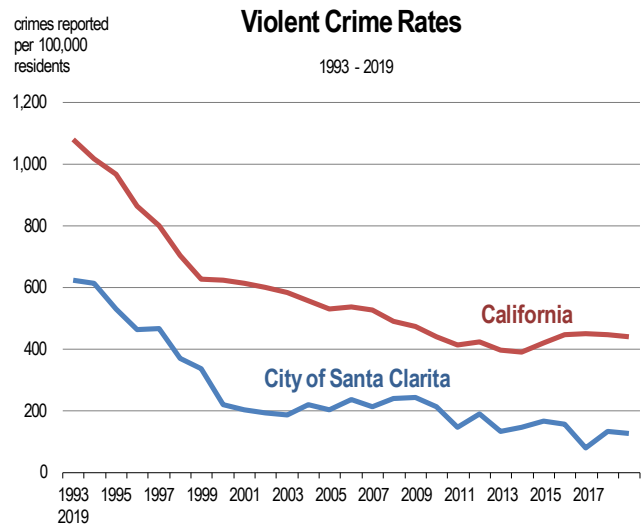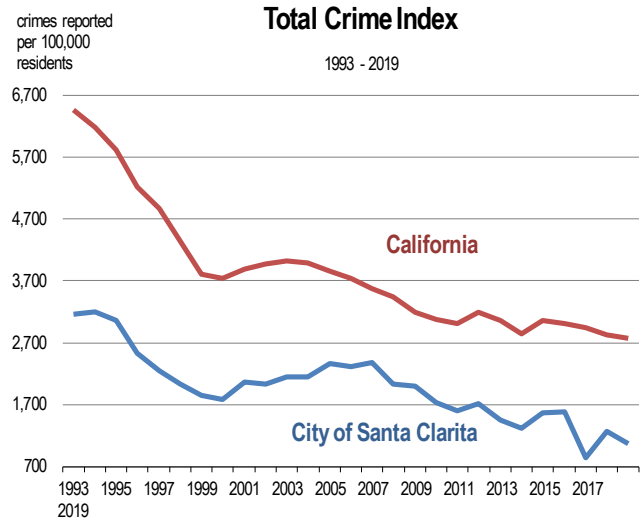
Children Living in Poverty

Quality of Life Indicators

The social environment of the Santa Clarita Valley directly affects local business performance and influences home prices. Public safety, traffic congestion, school quality, and child welfare are important features of this environment. In this chapter, these topics are examined with information on local crime rates, traffic counts, standardized tests, and youth poverty.

Crime

For areas of California, crime levels can be compared to one another on the basis of the Total Crime Index. The Total Crime Index is the sum of the following crime categories: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny, and arson. The most recent information describes crime levels in 2019.

· In 2019, crime levels in the Santa Clarita Valley were near record lows. A total of 1,071 crimes were reported per 100,000 residents, which is lower than any year on record other than 2017.

· Crime rates across California were virtually unchanged in 2019. Statewide, there were 2,772 crimes per 100,000 residents, a 2 percent decrease from a year earlier.

· Santa Clarita is one of the safest cities in Los Angeles County, with violent crime rates that are consistently lower than other regions.

· Out of the 87 cities in Los Angeles County, Santa Clarita had the 15th lowest violent crime rate in 2019.

Total Crime Index

1993 - 2019

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

Violent Crime Rates

1993 - 2019

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

Property Crime Rates

1993 - 2019

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

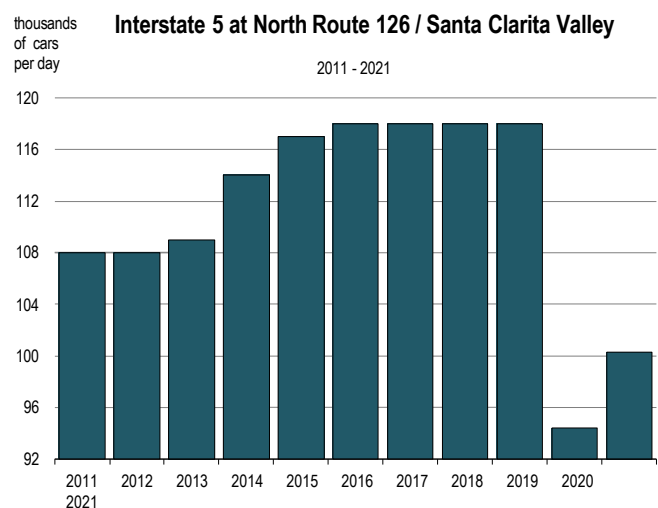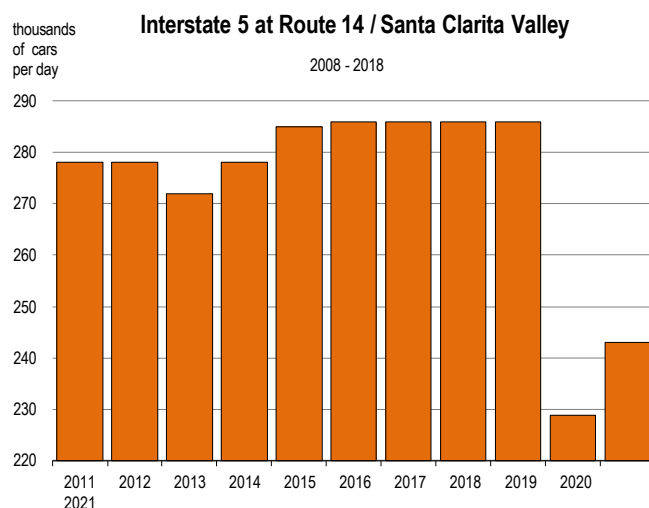| Crime Rates	Santa Clarita Valley						2012-2019	
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	– crime reports per 100,000 residents –							
City of Santa Clarita								
Homicide	1	1	0	3	1	1	2	1
Rape	17	9	7	16	21	9	20	22
Robbery	54	47	44	59	58	27	43	41
Aggravated assault	120	76	96	89	77	43	70	63
Burglary	344	341	295	313	310	159	269	180
Motor vehicle theft	170	121	117	142	197	99	136	100
Larceny	1,018	852	760	942	926	502	720	664

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

· Santa Clarita also has an exceptionally low rate of property crime.

· In 2019, the City of Santa Clarita also had the 15th lowest rate of property crime in Los Angeles County.

Traffic

Traffic counts can reveal information about economic and demographic trends. In general, traffic counts decline during periods of

economic weakness and grow during periods of strength. This occurs for several reasons, including the increased transportation of goods, a larger number of individuals commuting to work, and higher disposable incomes that can be spent on cars and gas.
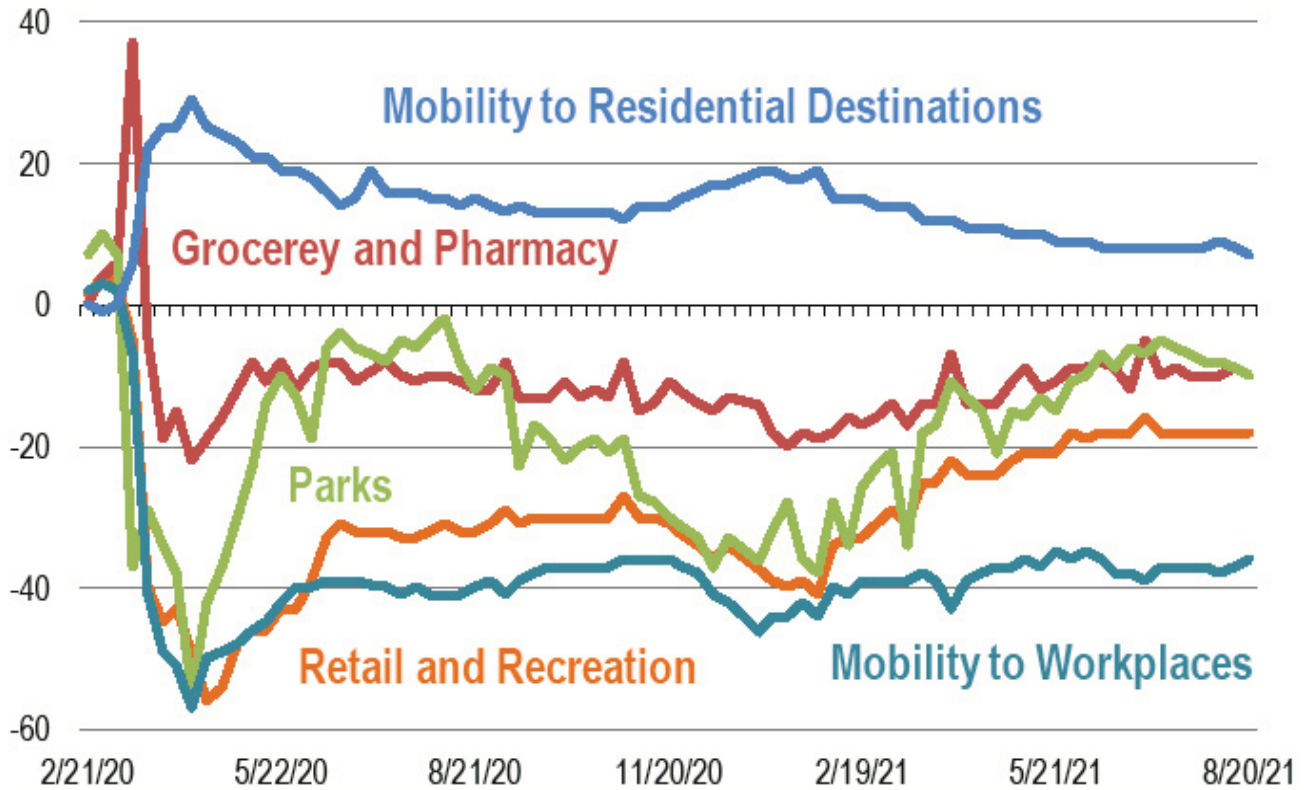
· Traffic volumes plummeted during the coronavirus pandemic.

· Across the Santa Clarita Valley, traffic counts fell by 20 percent in 2020.

thousands of cars per day
Interstate 5 at Route 14 / Santa Clarita Valley
2008 - 2018

thousands of cars per day
Interstate 5 at North Route 126 / Santa Clarita Valley
2011 - 2021

Mobility in the Santa Clarita Valley

percent change from Jan. 2020

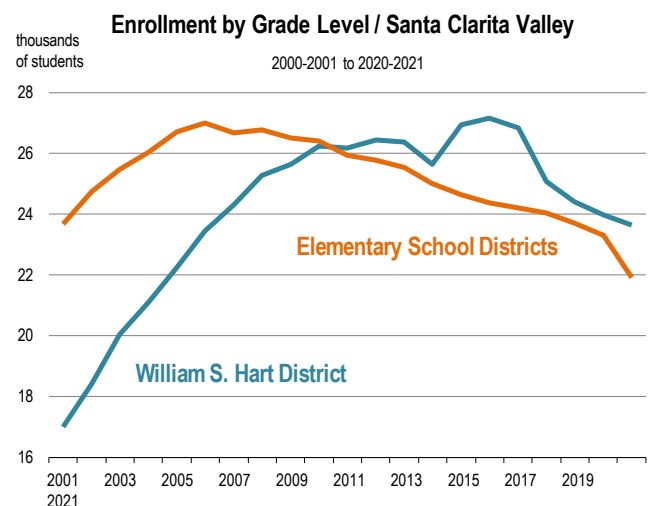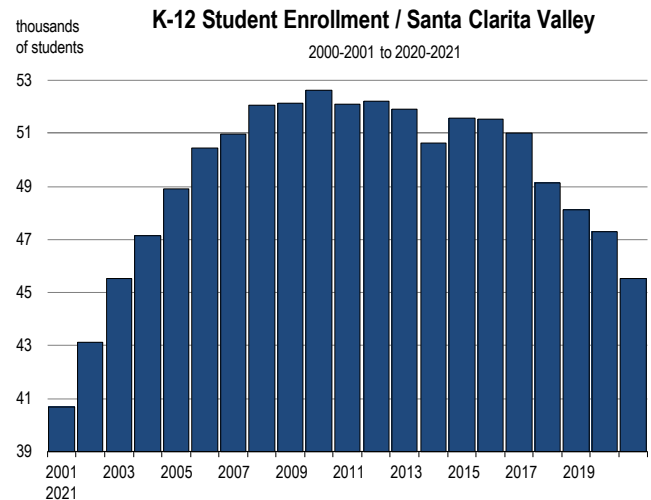Weekly: February 21, 2020 -- August 20, 2021

- By mid-2021, traffic was still 15 percent below 2019 levels.

- The largest decrease was observed in travel to workplaces. Very soon after the onset of the pandemic, mobility to work fell 60 percent below January 2020 levels. By mid-2021 it was still 36 percent below normal.

- By mid-2021, travel to grocery stores, pharmacies, and parks had almost returned to normal.

- In a crucial development for the SCV, travel to recreation and retail locations (including restaurants) had recovered more than half of its early pandemic decline by August 2021.

- The SCV has a large tourism industry, and mobility to entertainment venues is a real-time indicator of overall tourism activity.

Quality of Education

Enrollments

· During the 2020-2021 school year, enrollment in Santa Clarita Valley public schools declined by 1,745 students.

· Enrollment has been in decline for several years, but the trend was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

· Schools were closed for in-person learning and it was a challenge for some students to attend classes virtually.

· Enrollment at the William S. Hart district declined by 345 students. In the Hart district, enrollment has returned to 2005 levels.

· Enrollment in the elementary districts fell by 1,400 students.

· Elementary school enrollment in has returned to 1998 levels.

K-12 Student Enrollment / Santa Clarita Valley
2000-2001 to 2020-2021

Enrollment by Grade Level / Santa Clarita Valley
2000-2001 to 2020-2021

Public School Enrollment	Santa Clarita Valley				2013-2014 to 2020-2021			
	-school year-							
	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Castaic Union Elementary	2,651	2,568	2,354	2,234	2,153	2,037	2,020	1,860
Newhall Elementary	6,831	6,739	6,650	6,706	6,537	6,539	6,267	5,920
Saugus Union Elementary	10,012	9,911	9,984	9,900	9,960	9,791	9,704	9,071
Sulphur Springs Union Elementary	5,501	5,437	5,383	5,370	5,395	5,336	5,329	5,069
Total Elementary	**24,995**	**24,655**	**24,371**	**24,210**	**24,045**	**23,703**	**23,320**	**21,920**
William S. Hart Union High	25,640	26,938	27,155	26,822	25,080	24,414	23,968	23,623
Santa Clarita Valley Total	**50,635**	**51,593**	**51,526**	**51,032**	**49,125**	**48,117**	**47,288**	**45,543**

Source: California Department of Education

· The largest decrease was observed at Saugus Union, which lost 633 students (a decline of 6.5 percent).

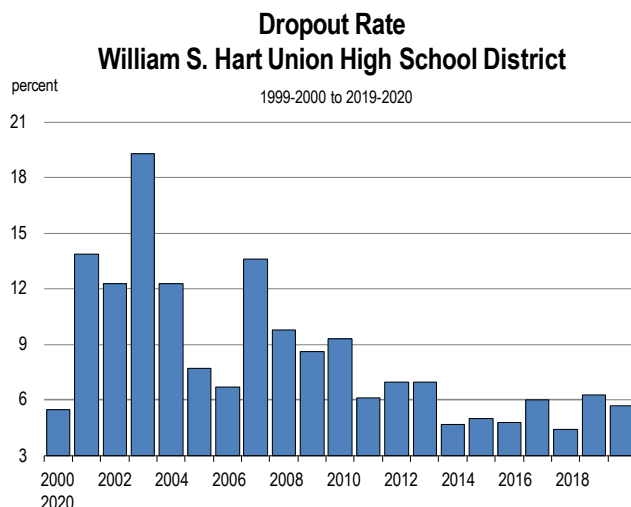· All elementary districts were characterized by decreases of at least 5 percent.

Dropout Rate

The rate at which students choose to dropout of school is an important indicator of how well schools are keeping students interested and preparing them for the workplace.

Teens who drop out of high school are unlikely to have the minimum skills and credentials necessary to function in today's increasingly technological workplace.

The completion of high school is required for accessing post-secondary education and is a minimum qualification for most jobs.

· At the William S. Hart Union High School District, the dropout rate has been exceptionally low for almost a decade.

Dropout Rate
William S. Hart Union High School District

percent
1999-2000 to 2019-2020

· In the 2019-2020 school year (the most recent data available), only 5.7 percent of students dropped out.

· Statewide, 15.7 percent of students dropped out.

· Across Los Angeles County, 23.9 percent of students dropped out.
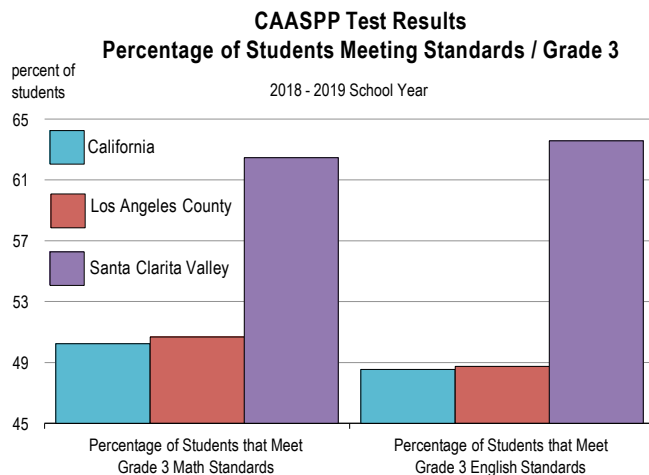
Elementary School Testing

California schools now administer the CAASPP exam – a replacement system for the old California Standard Test (CST).

The State of California has established benchmarks for student scores, and schools can be evaluated by the rate at which their students pass these benchmarks.
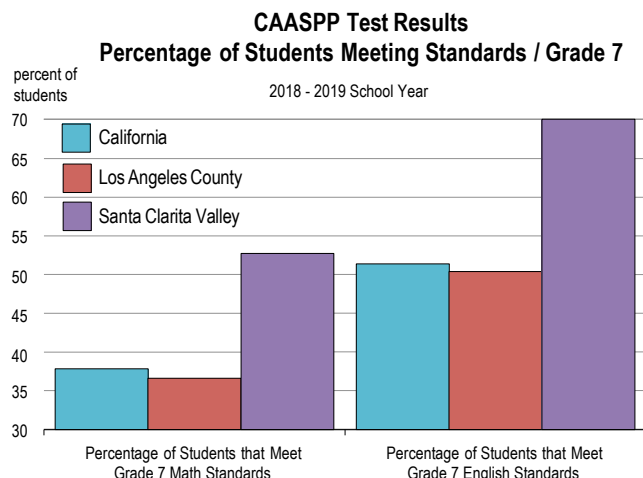
This analysis (arbitrarily) presents scores for third grade and seventh grade as representative of elementary and junior high students.

Because testing was disrupted during the coronavirus pandemic, the most recently available data describes the 2018-2019 school year.

· In the Santa Clarita Valley, third grade students significantly outperformed their peers across Los Angeles County and the State of California.

· This outperformance occurred in both Math and English.

CAASPP Test Results
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards / Grade 3

percent of
students

2018 - 2019 School Year

· Among third grade students, more than 60 percent of test takers passed the Math and English tests.

· In Los Angeles County and across California, only 48 percent to 50 percent of third grade students passed the tests.

CAASPP Test Results
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards / Grade 7

percent of
students

2018 - 2019 School Year

· At the seventh grade level, more than 70 percent of Santa Clarita Valley students passed the English portion of the test, which is almost 20 percentage points higher than students across Los Angeles County and California.

· Almost 53 percent of Santa Clarita Valley students passed the seventh grade Math portion, which is approximately 15 percentage points higher than Los Angeles County or California.
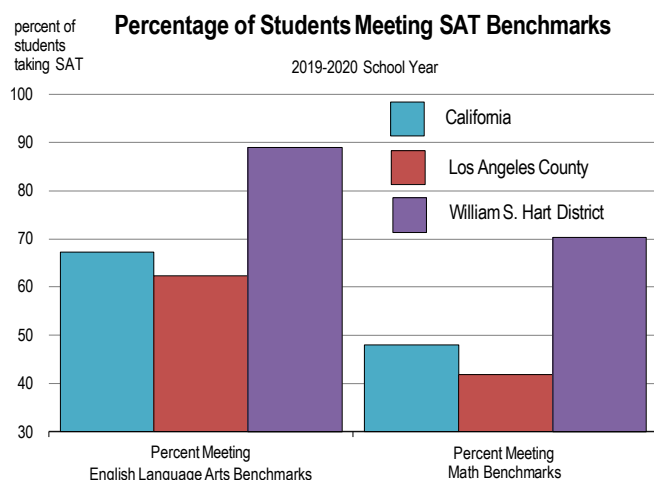
The SAT

The SAT is a standardized test taken by juniors and seniors in high school.

The SAT is typically a requirement for admission to 4-year colleges and universities, although some colleges and universities are beginning to adopt an "SAT optional" approach.

The State of California has established benchmarks for student success, and schools can be evaluated by the number of students that meet or exceed these benchmarks.

In general, schools that have a large number of students meeting these standards have prepared their students for success at the college level.

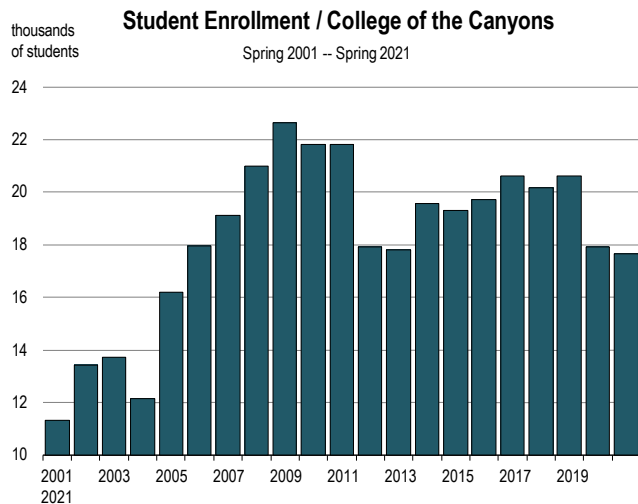· High school students in the Santa Clarita Valley typically score very well on the SAT.

Percentage of Students Meeting SAT Benchmarks

2019-2020 School Year

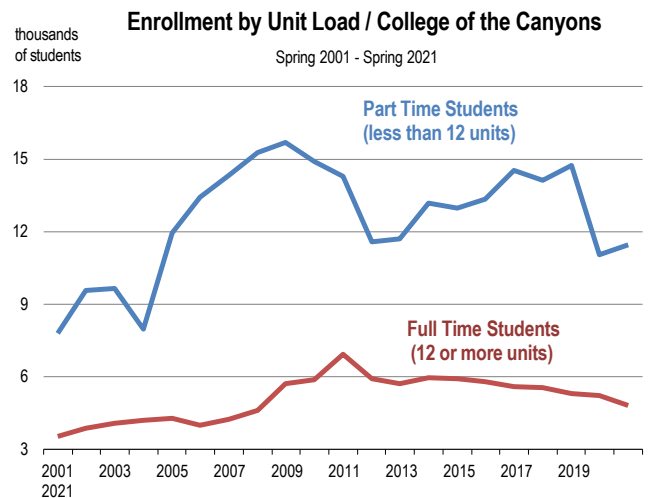| SAT Results	2019-2020 School Year	
High School / Aggregate	English Language Arts	Math
--percent of students meeting benchmarks--		
Canyon High	81.1	56.9
Hart (William S.) Senior High	84.2	59.2
Saugus High	93.5	76.9
Valencia High	92.5	71.4
Academy of the Canyons	98.4	87.5
West Ranch High	92.1	82.9
Golden Valley High	82.7	61.5
William S. Hart District	**88.9**	**70.2**
Los Angeles County	**62.3**	**41.8**
State of California	**67.3**	**47.9**

Source: California Department of Education

· Within the William S. Hart High School district, 88.9 percent of students met or exceeded statewide benchmarks on the English Language Arts section of the SAT during 2019-2020.

· In the Hart district, 70.2 percent of students met or exceeded benchmarks on the Math section.

· Students in the Hart district outperformed the California and Los Angeles County averages on both sections of the test.

· Academy of the Canyons was the best performing school in the Valley in 2019-2020.

· Other top performers were West Ranch, Valencia, and Saugus.

· In the 2019-2020 school year, fewer than half of all seniors took the SAT.

· If "SAT optional" admissions practices become more common, SAT participation could decline even further.
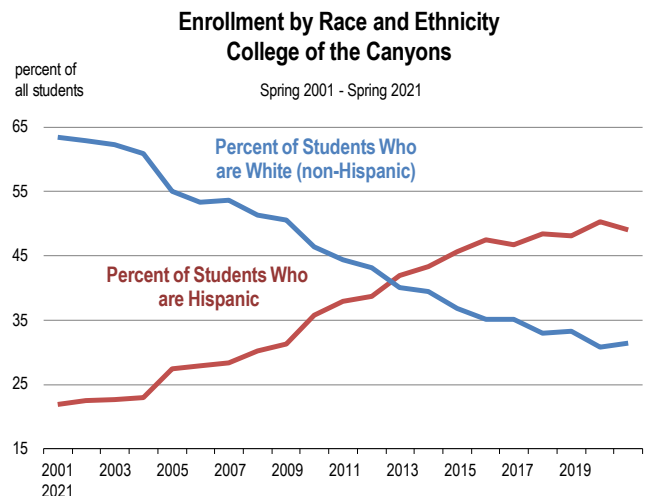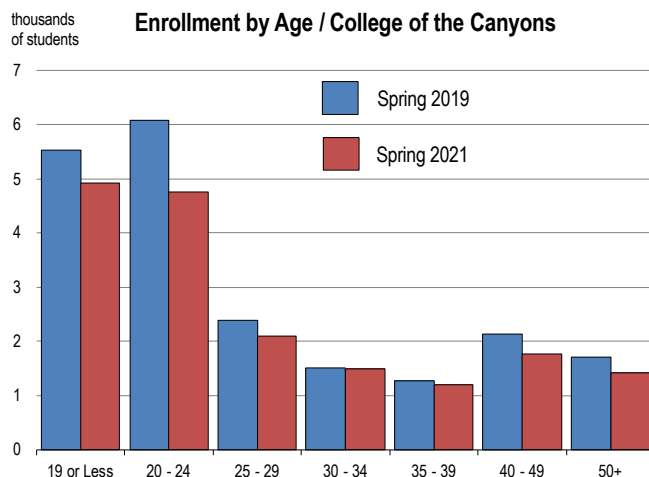
College of the Canyons

· In 2020 and 2021, enrollment at College of the Canyons decreased sharply.

· The largest decreases were observed in students aged 24 and under. Decreases were very small among full-time students but were large for part-time students.

Student Enrollment / College of the Canyons

Spring 2001 -- Spring 2021

thousands of students

Enrollment by Unit Load / College of the Canyons

Spring 2001 - Spring 2021

thousands of students

Part Time Students
(less than 12 units)

Full Time Students
(12 or more units)

· Enrollment declined faster among male students than female students, but male students still accounted for well over half of all enrollments.

· Hispanic students accounted for almost half of all enrollments while non-Hispanic White students represented 31 percent of the campus population.

· The campus-wide enrollment declines in 2020 and 2021 did not impact the long-term trend of higher representation among Hispanic students.

· In the Spring of 2021, approximately 5 percent of students identified as Black, 6 percent identified as Asian, 5 percent identified as Pacific Islander, and 3 percent identified with multiple racial cohorts. These shares have not changed substantially over the last decade.

Enrollment by Age / College of the Canyons

thousands of students

Spring 2019
Spring 2021

Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity
College of the Canyons

Spring 2001 - Spring 2021

percent of all students

Percent of Students Who are White (non-Hispanic)

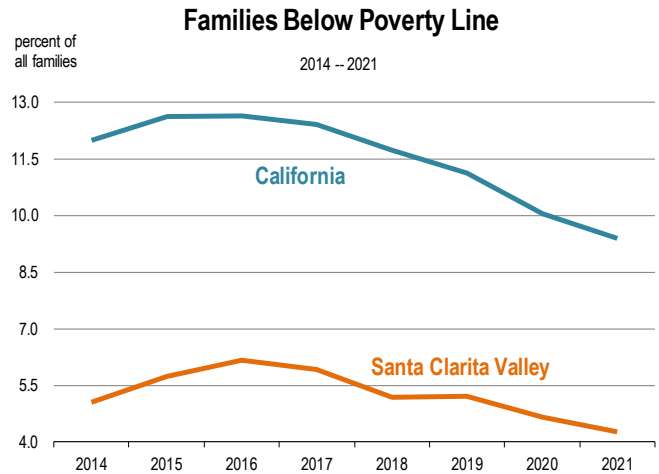Percent of Students Who are Hispanic

Children Living in Poverty

Children under 18 are much more likely than adults to be poor.

For a family of four with two children, the federal poverty level is $26,500.
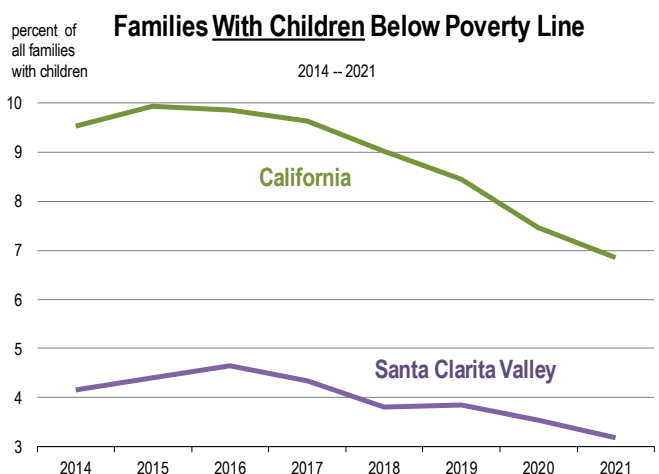
Being raised in poverty places children at higher risk for a wide range of problems.

Research indicates that children who are raised in poverty are disproportionately exposed to risk factors that may impair the development process, contribute to poor academic achievement, and ultimately result in lower earnings in adulthood.

· In 2021, 4.3 percent of families in the Santa Clarita Valley were under the poverty level.

· Approximately 3.2 percent of families with children were in poverty.

· Across California, 9.4 percent of families were below the poverty level.

· In 2021, 6.9 percent of California families with children were living in poverty.

· Despite a deep recession, fewer families fell below the poverty line in 2020 and 2021.

Families Below Poverty Line

percent of all families

2014 -- 2021

· Why? Because job-related income losses were offset by federal and California stimulus packages.

· The stimulus programs were so large, some individuals actually earned higher incomes after they lost their jobs.

Families With Children Below Poverty Line

percent of all families with children

2014 -- 2021

Data in this chapter is from the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the California Department of Transportation; Google; the California Department of Education; the California Community College System; Claritas.