

# QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

Introduction



Crime



Traffic



Quality of Education



Children Living in Poverty



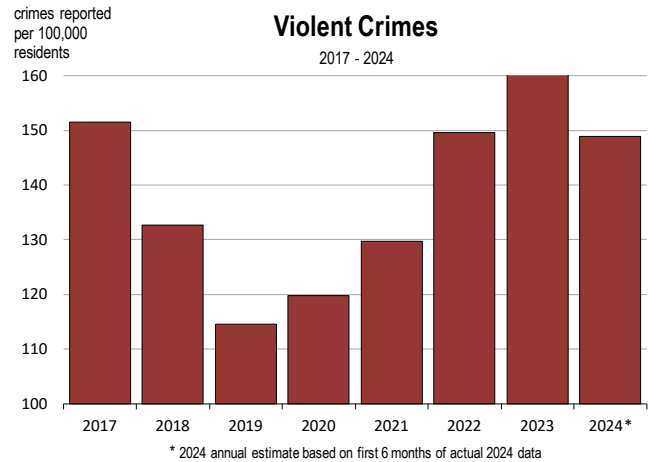
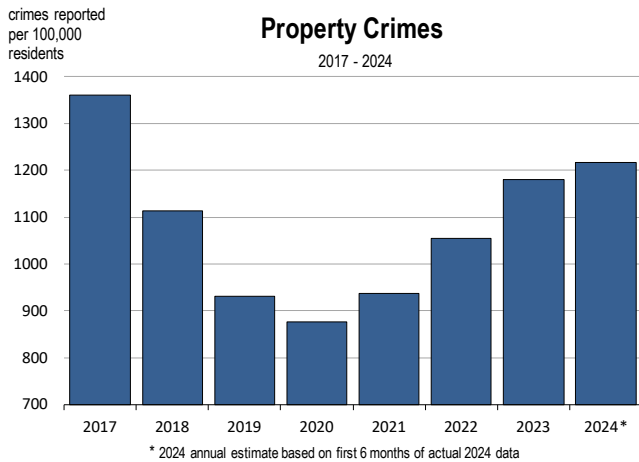
## Introduction

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

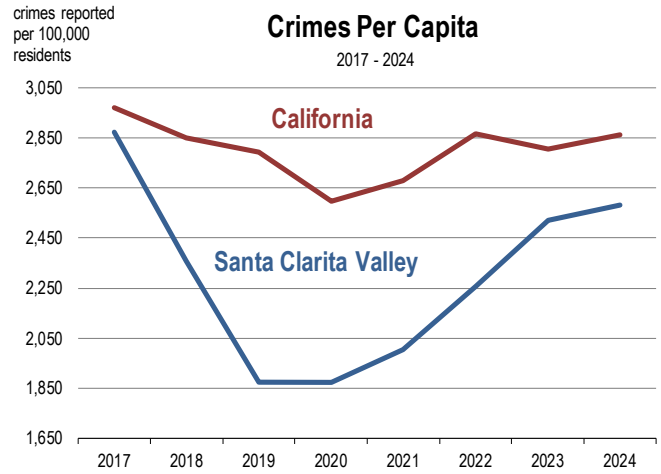
For areas of California, crime levels can be compared to one another based on the Total Crime Index. The Total Crime Index is the sum of the following crime categories: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny, and arson. The latest information describes crime levels in 2024 through June.

- Crime levels in the Santa Clarita Valley rose significantly from 2022 to 2023, and they appear to be rising slightly in 2024. If the pace of crime incidence between January and June remains consistent for the rest of the year, crime levels will rise from 2023.
- The Total Crime Index reported in Santa Clarita Valley was 1,341 in 2023. In 2024 however, it is running at 1,365. The implied increase is 1.8 percent.
- Although the total crime index increased significantly in 2023 and is increasing slightly in 2024, crime remains well below pre-pandemic levels.
- Violent crime rates per 100,000 residents are forecast to drop slightly, while property crime per 100,000 residents is expected to rise.



Comparing the first half of 2023 to the first half of 2024, violent crime rates have dropped by one percent and property crime rates have increased by 14.5 percent.

- Relative to California, crime in Santa Clarita Valley has been consistently lower for the last 10 years for both property and violent crimes per capita.
- 2024 data for California is not yet available. Data for Santa Clarita Valley is available for the January-June period of 2024.



Crime Reports	Santa Clarita Valley							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Willful homicide	6	4	4	4	6	1	6	4
Forcible rape	59	67	65	55	59	47	44	32
Robbery	145	118	108	90	90	109	139	102
Aggravated assault	232	202	165	209	231	290	286	300
Burglary	823	735	513	465	399	459	548	664
Larceny-Theft	2,625	2,146	1,958	1,782	1,935	2,208	2,320	2,368
Motor vehicle theft	498	364	289	365	433	462	565	526
Arson	23	34	24	10	23	19	37	22

\*2024 values are estimates based on actual data for the first 6 months of 2024

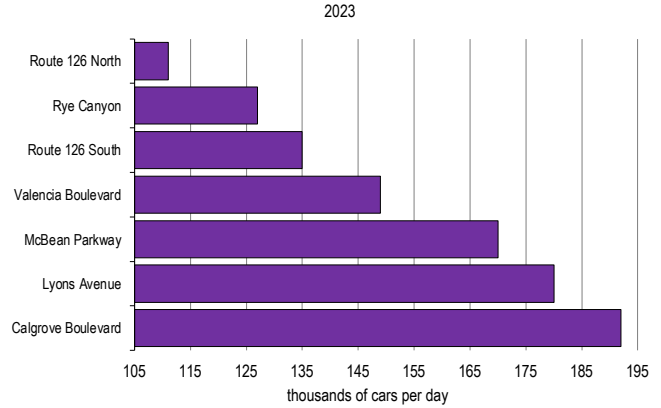
Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

## Traffic

Traffic counts can reveal information about economic and demographic trends. In general, traffic counts decline during periods of economic weakness and rise during periods of strength. This occurs for several reasons, including the increased transportation of goods, a larger number of employed workers commuting to work, more people traveling, and higher disposable incomes that can be spent on vehicles and gasoline.

- Traffic volumes plummeted during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Across the Santa Clarita Valley, traffic counts fell by 20 percent in 2020.
- By mid-2021, traffic was still 15 percent below 2019 levels.
- Traffic has continued to rebound steadily in 2022 and 2023 from pandemic level lows. Mid-2023 traffic reports indicate total traffic

**Traffic Counts / Northbound Interstate 5 Junctions  
Santa Clarita Valley**

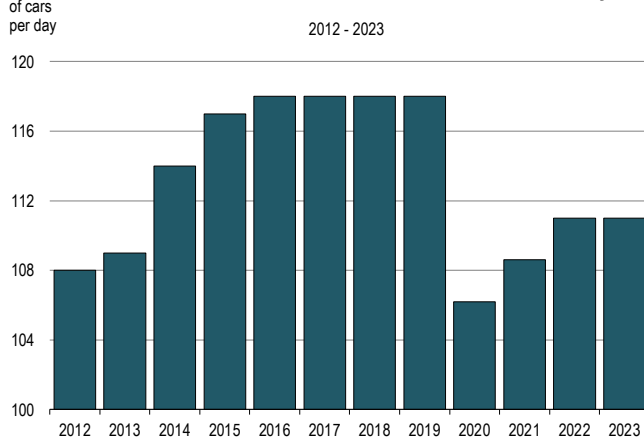


has stayed steady since 2022.

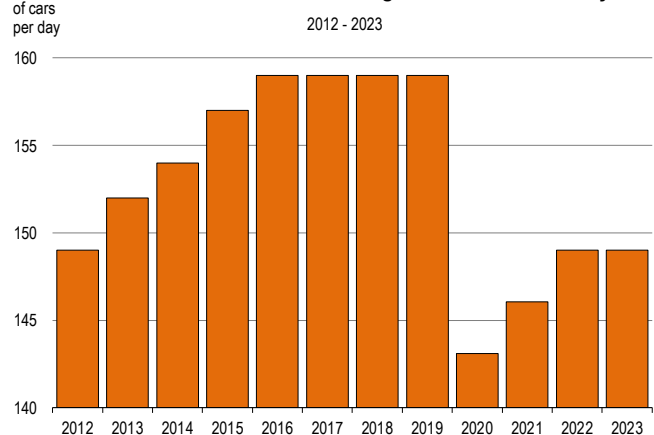
- Despite the increase, traffic still hasn't reached the pre-pandemic levels prevailing in 2019.
- Traffic counts on Interstate 5 Junctions through Santa Clarita have all increased since 2021. Traffic counts have increased between 3,000-4,000 cars per day at each junction.

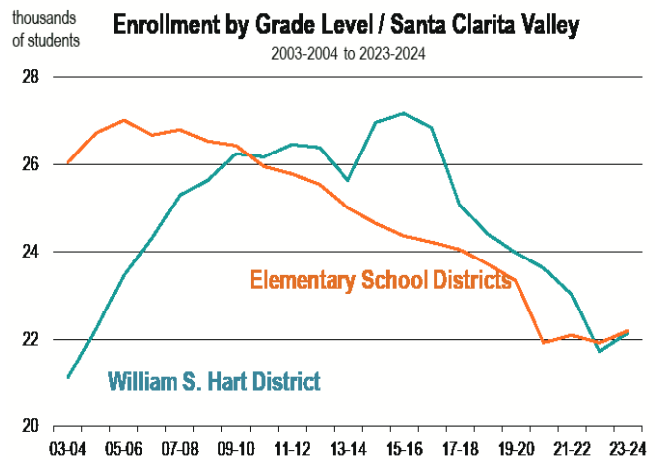
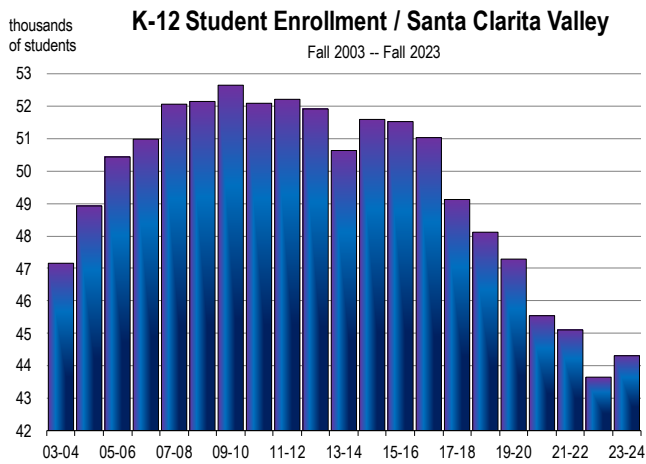
## Quality of Education

**Interstate 5 at North Route 126 / Santa Clarita Valley**



**Valencia Boulevard Interchange / Santa Clarita Valley**





### Enrollments

- During the 2023-2024 school year, public school enrollment in the Santa Clarita Valley increased in both High Schools and Elementary Schools.
- Enrollment had been in decline for several years, but the trend was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The 2023-2024 school year recorded the first increase in K-12 enrollment in the Santa Clarita Valley in nearly 10 years.

- Total enrollment is now at its second-lowest level since 2002.

### 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

Public School Enrollment Santa Clarita Valley									
Number of Students	--School Years--								
	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Castaic Union Elementary	2,354	2,234	2,153	2,037	2,020	1,860	1,893	1,859	1,938
Newhall Elementary	6,650	6,706	6,537	6,539	6,267	5,920	5,834	5,918	5,928
Saugus Union Elementary	9,984	9,900	9,960	9,791	9,704	9,071	9,170	9,070	9,097
Sulphur Springs Union Elementary	5,383	5,370	5,395	5,336	5,329	5,069	5,188	5,067	5,211
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>24,371</b>	<b>24,210</b>	<b>24,045</b>	<b>23,703</b>	<b>23,320</b>	<b>21,920</b>	<b>22,085</b>	<b>21,914</b>	<b>22,174</b>
William S. Hart Union High	27,155	26,822	25,080	24,414	23,968	23,623	23,019	21,735	22,135
<b>Santa Clarita Valley Total</b>	<b>51,526</b>	<b>51,032</b>	<b>49,125</b>	<b>48,117</b>	<b>47,288</b>	<b>45,543</b>	<b>45,104</b>	<b>43,649</b>	<b>44,309</b>

Source: California Department of Education

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. In the 2022-2023 school year (the most recent data available), only 2.4 percent of students dropped out.
- Statewide in 2022-2023, 11.3 percent of students dropped out. Across Los Angeles County, 12 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).

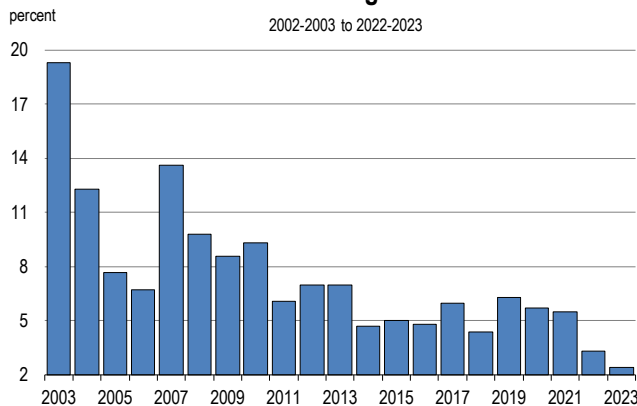
The State of California has established benchmarks for student scores, and schools can be evaluated by the rate at which their students pass these benchmarks.

This analysis (arbitrarily) presents scores for third grade and seventh grade as representative

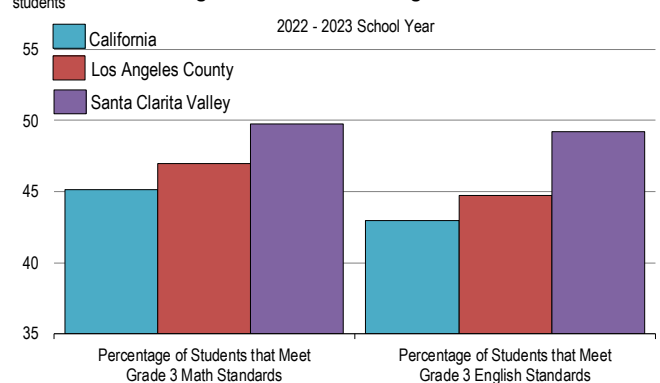
of elementary and junior high students. Because of the pandemic, there was no testing during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 years. The following interpretation of recent public school test scores is based on testing during the 2021-2022 school year.

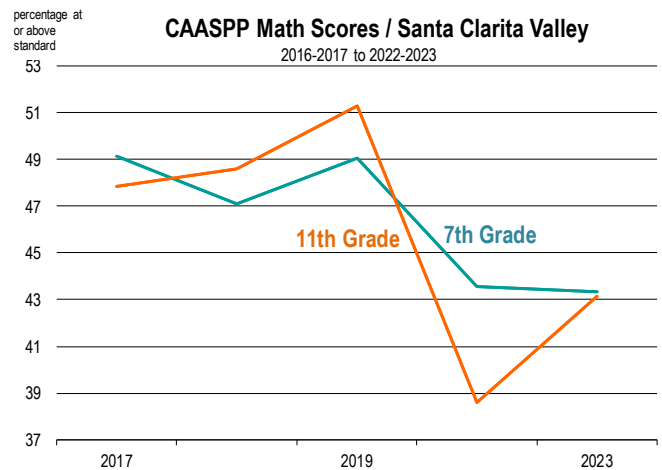
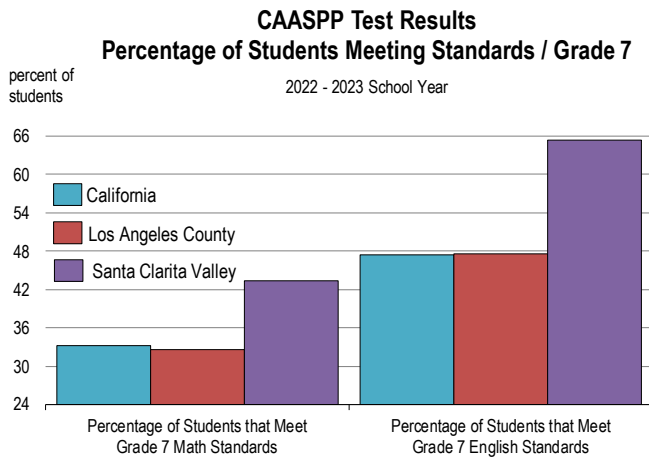
- Third-grade students at Santa Clarita Elementary School outperformed their peers across Los Angeles County and the State of California. This outperformance occurred in both Math and English.
- Among third-grade students, around 49 percent of students passed the Math tests. Passing rates for the English tests were only slightly lower.
- In Los Angeles County, around 47 percent of third graders passed the Math tests, and around 45 percent passed the English tests. Statewide, around 45 percent of third graders passed the Math while only 43 percent passed the English tests.
- About 65 percent of Santa Clarita Valley seventh grade students passed the English

**Dropout Rate**  
William S. Hart Union High School District



**CAASPP Test Results**  
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards / Grade 3

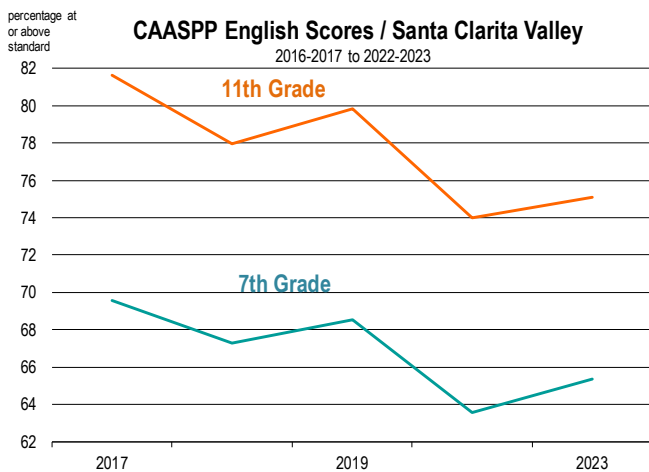




portion of the test, which is 18.4 percentage points higher than students across California for the 2022-2023 school year.

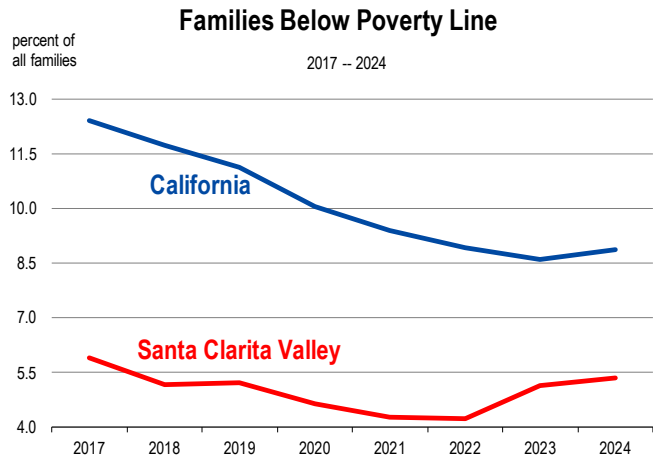
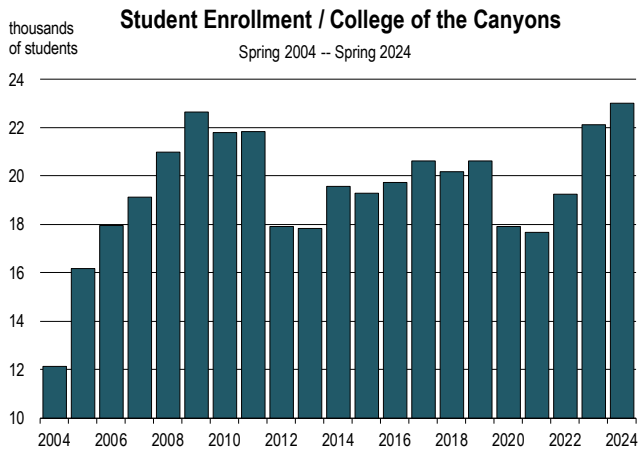
- Seventh-grade students struggled with the math section of the CAASPP test in the 2022-2023 school year. California and LA county recorded passing rates of 33.2 and 32.5 percent for math. Santa Clarita Valley reported passing rates of 43.3.
- There was no data for 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- English scores in the Santa Clarita Valley for seventh-grade and eleventh-grade dropped significantly after the pandemic. However, in 2023, both grades saw a slight increase in passing rates from the 2022 school year. Math scores for seventh-grade and eleventh-grade saw a similar decline during the pandemic. Scores for eleventh graders increased by around 4%, while seventh-grade scores dropped slightly.



### College of the Canyons

- Enrollment at the College of the Canyons continued to increase during the 2023-2024 school year, it is greater than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All age groups saw increases in enrollment from the Spring of 2022 to the Spring of 2024. Significantly larger increases in enrollment were seen in the older age groups.



### Children Living in Poverty

Being raised in poverty places children at higher risk for a wide range of problems. Research indicates that poor children are disproportionately exposed to risk factors that may impair the development process and contribute to poor academic achievement.

- For a family of four with two children, the federal poverty level is \$31,200.
- In 2024, 5.34 percent of families in the Santa Clarita Valley were under the poverty level. Approximately 3.64 percent of families with

children did not eclipse the federal poverty level.

- Across California, 8.86 percent of families were below the poverty level, and 6.18 percent of families with children were living in poverty.
- From 2023 to 2024, the number of families below the poverty line increased in Santa Clarita Valley while the number of families with children below the poverty line decreased. For California, the number of families below the poverty line increased after years of steadily decreasing while the number of families with children below the poverty line saw a slight decrease.

