

State Funding Reduction for Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools Hurts Disadvantaged Students



Personalized Learning is an Individualized Education Approach Proven to Closing the Achievement and Equity Gaps

Personalized Learning public charter schools are **tuition-free public schools** that serve some of the state's most disadvantaged students. Many of these students are low income, minority, and special needs youth who struggle in a traditional class setting. Students who come to these schools are often credit deficient or are at risk of dropping out of public school. The widening achievement gap exacerbated by the disproportionate learning loss caused by the pandemic has reinforced that a one-sized, system-focused approach doesn't work for many students.

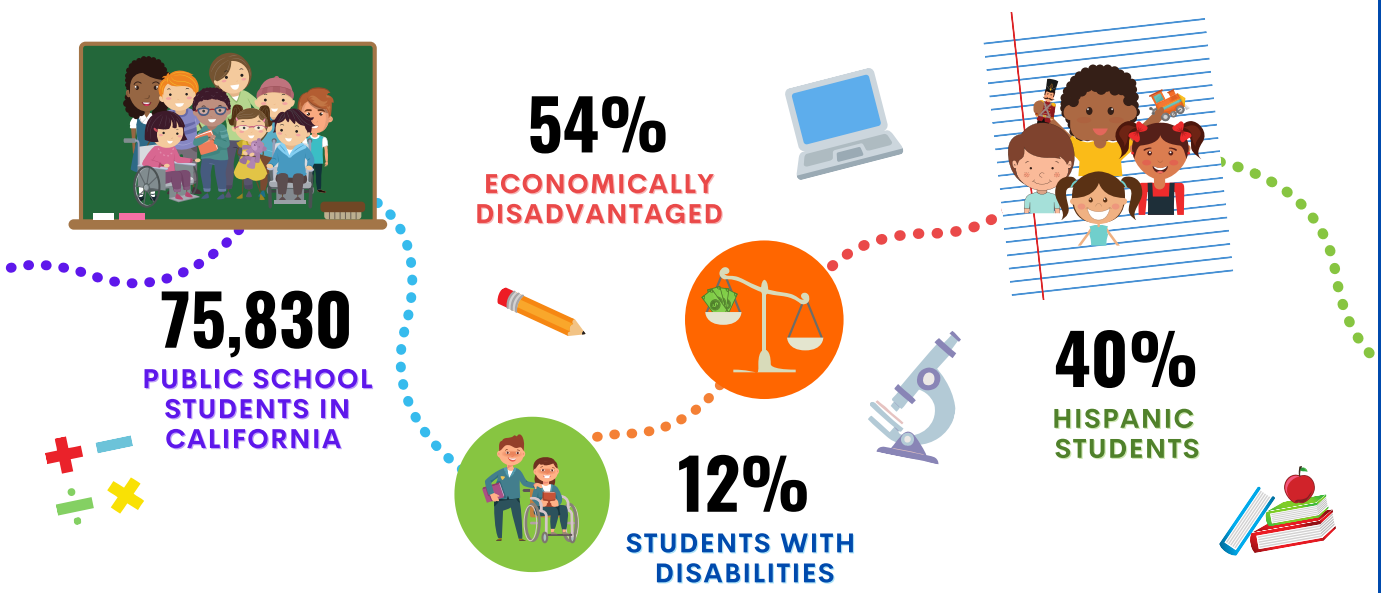
Personalized education is proven to close both the achievement and equity gap for tens of thousands of students annually in California. Some students come to Personalized Learning public charter schools for an intentionally short stay for academic recovery. After they accelerate their learning progress, they may choose to return to a traditional school. Many others stay for several years to receive tailored, flexible, student-centered education and after graduation they pursue higher education or successfully enter the workforce.

Personalized Learning public schools have achieved consistent success and demonstrated tremendous resilience in providing high quality public education during the COVID-19 crisis. At the very same time, funding for Personalized Learning schools has been unfairly reduced while all other public schools in California received growth funding. This highly inequitable education funding departs from the historic policy of "funding following the student," severely limiting options for students who want a personalized education.

Personalized Learning is a successful alternative to a one-size-fits-all education model. It provides choice and flexibility in curriculum, learning environments, and pacing for every student and can include a tailored blend of:

- Distance learning
- Independent study
- Home study
- Instruction and other services at resource center facilities
- Community and project-based learning
- Internships and CTE pathways

Large Numbers of Minority, Low-Income and Special Needs Students Attend Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools



*APLUS+ data from 2018-2019 school year

Disadvantaged Students Succeed With Personalized Learning Education

Personalized Learning Public charter school	Student Demographic	Subject (ELA = English Language arts)	% of students at PL school that met or exceeded CAASPP standards (Grades 3-8 and 11)	% of students statewide that met or exceeded CAASPP standards (Grades 3-8 and 11)
Stellar Charter (Redding)	Economically disadvantaged	ELA	72.55%	39.2%
River Springs Charter (Temecula)	Economically disadvantaged African American	ELA	31.01%	27.62%
Citrus Springs Charter (Temecula)	Economically disadvantaged Hispanic	Math	42.5%	24.5%
CORE Butte (Chico) *	Homeless	ELA	52.87%	32.86%
Sierra Charter (Fresno)	Parent does not have a high school diploma	ELA	54.55%	31.56%
Pacific Charter Springs (Temecula)	English learner	Math	23.08%	12.43%
Community Montessori (Escondido)	Student with disability	ELA	36.73%	16.36%

*This student demographic was temporarily intensified in the aftermath of the tragic 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise.

Key Benefits of the Flexible and Adaptable Personalized Learning Model

Student-centric, individualized education: Provides choice, flexibility, and a variety of options for every student in how, what, when, where, and with whom each student learns that is tailored to their needs, interests, and goals.

Small class sizes: Generally limited to 20 students or fewer.

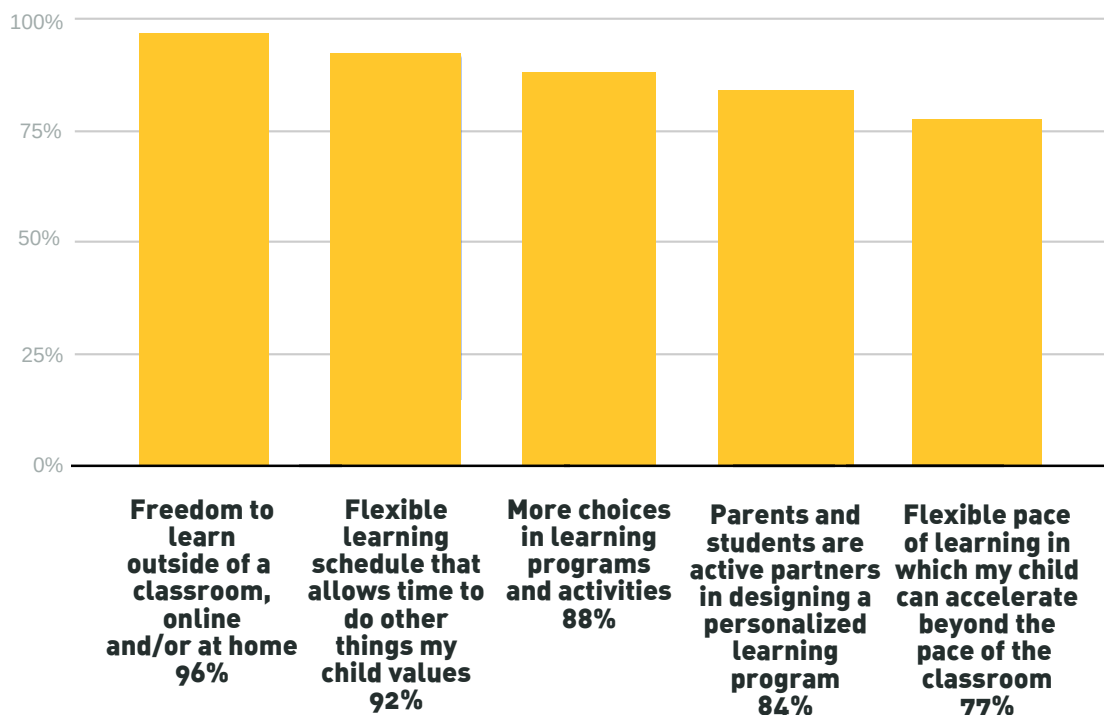
Strong relationships: A credentialed personal advisory teacher/guide works collaboratively with each student and family to develop and refine, as needed, each student's Personalized Learning Plan (PLP).

Ongoing teacher professional development training: Based on current state standards.

Designed like a university model: Students can attend in-person classes at their resource center campus and fulfill their other learning requirements off campus.

Partnerships with local colleges, universities, and businesses: Students have access and exposure to post-secondary pathways and opportunities prior to high school graduation.

Main Reasons Parents Enrolled Their Child in A Personalized Learning Public Charter School



(Results from 2016 APLUS+ parent survey)



Parents Say Their Children Thrive With Personalized Learning

"Before we were with River Springs, my son Santino was bullied and the teacher was contributing to the problem by her inaction. He was having nightmares and would wake up crying not wanting to go to school. Once we moved to Springs my son became another boy completely, performing as a normal kid with all the support. He stopped having nightmares and began sleeping well.

I never envisioned myself homeschooling as this is not part of my culture, but this has become a blessing for our family. The Education Specialist at Springs helped me understand the importance of schooling in another language. Santino began to read and write and his confidence grew. Now, he is doing math at grade level. I grew up going to a Catholic school and this was a big leap for us to do something so different than my culture. I have never regretted the decision to homeschool. We have so much support from all the providers for his IEP. River Springs is a wonderful group and a family. We love the support and technology, and the learning center classes are wonderful."



- Mom of a 7th grader who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is a re-designated English Language Learner (RFEP)

"While this school year has not gotten off to the traditional start, I want to share the awesome progress both Arionna and Ian have had this year so far. Last year, Arionna was testing at a 3rd grade level, and this year she is testing the 6th grade level. Ian was testing at a 1st grade level, and this year he is at a 3rd grade level. They are both testing at their grade levels, what progress!! They are both full of confidence and genuinely enjoy reading. Arionna is communicating with her classmates and teachers and holding her own in class, what a change. Ian volunteers to be the leader when they are broken into small groups via Zoom and loves to read out loud now. They are both happier and more confident.

Thank you for creating an environment that encourages a love of learning and happy students. We are very thankful to be a part of River Springs Charter School."

- Mom of three special education children, one of whom graduated in June 2020 from Springs Charter School with a year of college credit

Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools Provide In-Person Instruction

Personalized Learning public charter schools are classified as non-classroom-based public charters. This term simply means that students do not attend onsite classes under the supervision of a credentialed teacher for more than 80% of their instructional time. Many people assume that all non-classroom based public charter schools are exclusively online and do not realize that most Personalized Learning schools have facilities where students attend can traditional classes in-person and participate in onsite learning programs. Under the Personalized Learning model, in-person instruction is coupled with education delivered in alternative settings as part of a comprehensive learning experience.



The APLUS+ Distinction

APLUS+ Personalized Learning public charter school members are required to demonstrate their strong commitment to the Personalized Learning model, and to uphold high standards of accountability, integrity, and academic excellence.



75,000+ students in 56 California counties attend APLUS+ member schools

Upper Northern California

(Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity counties)

Lower Northern California

(Alameda, Amador, Colusa, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Marin, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Sierra, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, and Yolo counties)

Central California

(Calaveras, Fresno, Inyo, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne counties)

Central Coast

(Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties)

Upper Southern California

(Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties)

Lower Southern California

(Imperial, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties)

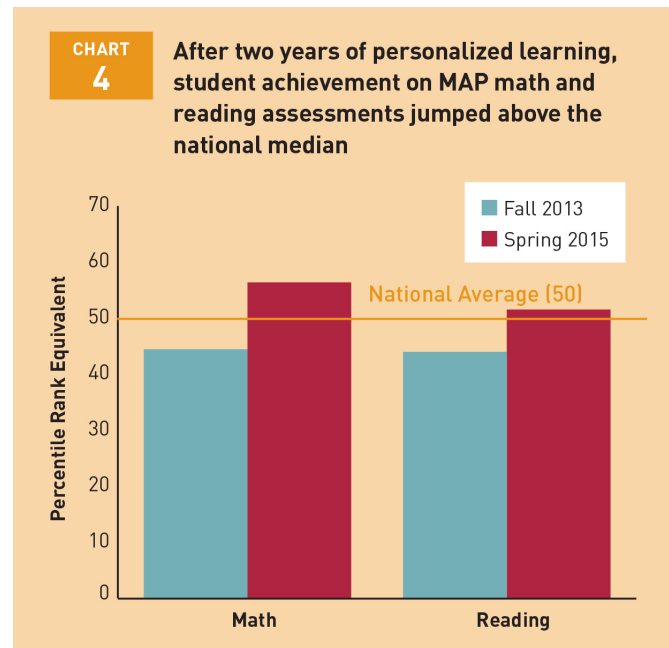
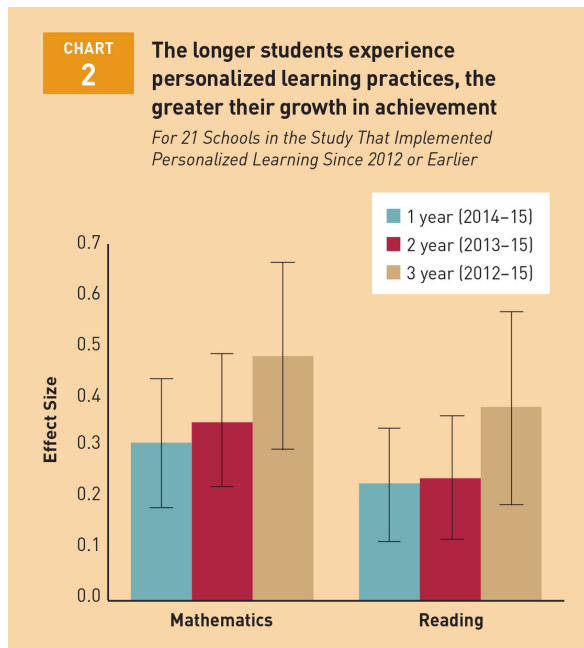


Multiple Studies Conclude Personalized Learning Works

Recent research from the RAND Corporation, Christensen Institute, CREDO at Stanford University, and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning shows that Personalized Learning is proven to close the education equity and achievement gap. APLUS+ network studies consistently demonstrate that the longer a student remains in a Personalized Learning public charter school the better their academic results.

Students Achieve Greater Academic Success in Personalized Learning Model

Greater Academic Progress. "Students in schools using Personalized Learning strategies made greater academic progress, over the course of two years, than a comparison group of students with similar academic performance and from schools with similar demographic profiles."¹



Greater Improvement Rates. "A large proportion of students with lower starting achievement levels experienced greater growth rates than their peers, particularly in math. A majority of the 62 charter schools in the sample had statistically positive results."¹

Serving Low-income Neighborhoods. "The schools included in the implementation analysis are predominantly located in urban areas (two are rural) and tend to serve large proportions of minority students from low-income families. According to information provided by administrators, the school-level median of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is 80 percent, and the school-level median of students of color is 75 percent."¹

Surpassing National Norms for Math and Reading. "Personalized Learning students surpassed national norms after two years. In both mathematics and reading, cumulative growth over the past two years is evident. Students started significantly below national norms, gained ground after one academic year, placing them above national norms at the end of the two years."²

COVID-19 Pandemic Exacerbated Learning Losses More Flexible and Adaptable Education Approaches Are Needed

"The underlying variations in 2019-2020 learning losses highlight the fact that school closures had highly differentiated impacts, with disadvantaged students generally suffering much more than students from advantaged families. The wide variation within states (and often within schools) means that conventional models of classroom-based instruction – a one-to-many, fixed pace approach -- will not meet the needs of students. New approaches must be allowed to ensure high quality instruction is available in different settings, recognizing that different skills may be needed for the different channels." ³

State Should Put Politics Aside and Support Personalized Learning Students

"Student-centered learning refers to an educational model that yields and bends to the needs and potential of each individual student first—not to the needs of the state, the teachers, the curriculum, the cohort, the politicians, the schedules, or any other element of the system....The idea is to enable students to pursue a learning path that's tailored to their own needs and timing, with a variety of options, tools, and guides to empower them." ⁴

"The majority of the current traditional education landscape has a one-size-fits-all feel, where each student's education is not differentiated and all are expected to progress at the same time through the same curriculum. Personalization theory pushes educators to think outside the box by emphasizing the need for learners to be involved in designing their own learning process." ⁵



APLUS+ member schools are experienced and exemplary leaders in providing Personalized Learning education in California.

References:

- 1 RAND Corporation. (2015, November). *Continued Progress: Promising Evidence on Personalized Learning*. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1300/RR1365/RAND_RR1365.pdf
- 2 RAND Corporation. (2017). *How Does Personalized Learning Affect Student Achievement?* https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9994.html
- 3 CREDO at Stanford University. (2020, October). *Estimates of Learning Loss in the 2019-2020 School Year*. <https://credo.stanford.edu/publications/estimates-learning-loss-2019-2020-school-year>
- 4 Christensen Institute. (2020, September). *Educator Competencies for Student-Centered teaching*. https://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/student_centered_microcredentials.pdf
- 5 International Association for K-12 Online Learning. (2013, October). *Mean What You Say: Defining and Integrating Personalized, Blended and Competency Education*. <https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/mean-what-you-say-1.pdf>