

Intake Line: 877-696-6529



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## **The Historic Test Score Drop of 2022: How to Help Students Recover from Pandemic Learning Loss?**

The pandemic had an historic and unprecedented impact on the education of all children, as schools switched to online distance instruction. Even through most schools reopened by September 2021, the 10-month lockdown has left an impact on children, as evidenced by the latest national and state 2022 standardized math and reading test scores. \*\*

### **2022 Mathematics Scores**

- 5-point drop nationally was the biggest in recorded history.
- Minnesota's 8th grade scores among the 10 worst in the nation; 11-point drop was equivalent to one school year lost.
- Fewer than half of Minnesota students tested proficient (45%).

### **2022 Reading Scores**

- Nationally and in Minnesota, scores dropped 3 points in both 4th and 8th grades, and are the lowest in 30 years, since 1992.
- Nationally, only 1 in 3 students demonstrated proficiency. The number of proficient Minnesota students fell by 8 points (59% in 2019 to 51% in 2022).
- The racial "achievement gap" grew wider – only 31% of Black and Hispanic students tested proficient, compared with 60% of white students.

If there is any doubt about how your child is doing in school, or if you suspect they may not have yet caught up to their grade level after the pandemic, it is important to voice your questions and concerns with their teacher as soon as possible. Getting students help quickly will prevent them from falling further behind in school.

### **Heading Into Spring 2023 Teacher Conferences: Reflection Questions for Parents**

1. Are you worried your child may have gotten behind in learning during the lockdown?
2. Do you know if your child is currently meeting grade-level expectations?
3. Is the school sending you timely and accurate progress reports?
4. Do you know if the school provides targeted interventions to help your child if (s)he struggles to learn? (*Ex., additional instruction, extra time for assignments*)
5. Are you satisfied with the amount of communication you have with your child's teacher(s)?

### **\*\*References:**

1. 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) "The Nation's Report Card" <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>

## Minnesota 2022 Student Survey: More Teens Struggling with Mental Health

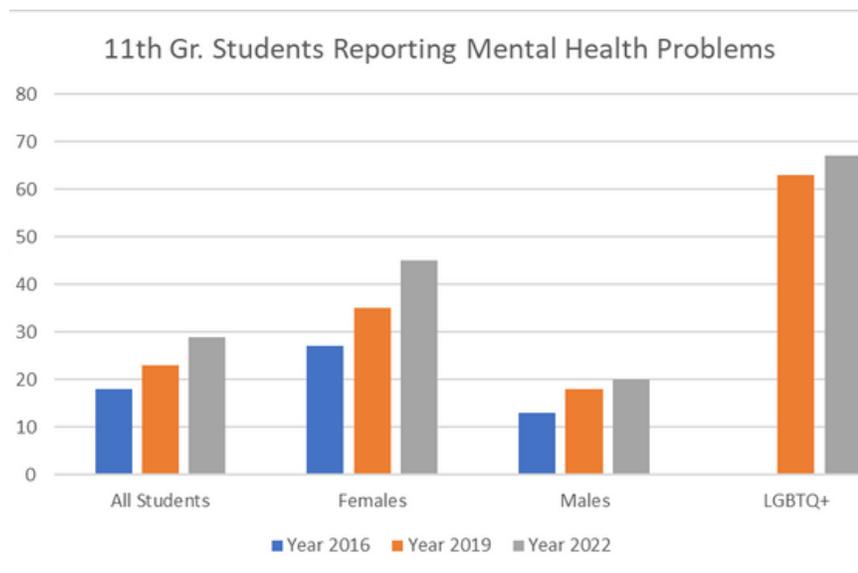
***"The pandemic worsened ongoing trends of mental health problems of teens."***

--Jan Malcom, MN Commissioner of Mental Health

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) surveys students in schools every 3 years. Last year's 2022 survey results showed the highest number of students struggling with mental health (i.e., anxiety, depression, emotional or behavioral issues) since MDH began doing the survey 30+ years ago. Of the 135,000 students surveyed last year, the percentage rates reporting long-term mental health problems went up among all groups (see chart). \*\*

### **However, LGBTQ+ students were the most impacted: ^^**

- 67% reported having mental health challenges
- 3X more likely (than cis gender) to think about suicide
- 4X more likely (than cis gender) to attempt suicide



^^No LGBTQ+ student survey data was collected before 2019.

Survey reports of bullying and cyberbullying also continued to increase in all groups. One bright spot of the survey, however, was that teens reported less alcohol and drug use.

### **Mental Health Advocacy Tips**

**Ask** a school counselor if there are any available school-based mental health services.

**Report** bullying promptly (*find reporting guidelines for bullying in student handbook*).

**Request** the school do an evaluation for special education services (*under IDEA*), or for accommodations to be made (*under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, i.e., a 504 Plan*) if the child's mental health, emotional, or behavioral problem is interfering with their ability to learn.

**Reach out** to an education advocate for extra help if needed.

\*\* Source: "2022 Minnesota Student Survey results released", Dec 23, 2022, Minnesota Department of Health <https://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2022/stsurvey122322.html>

## Discipline Disparities in Minnesota Schools

Last summer, the MN Department of Human Rights (MDHR) released a report on discipline disparities tied to race and disability in Minnesota schools. In the 3-year study, MDHR analyzed discipline data from 41 school districts and charter schools. The study only included subjective behavioral complaints (Ex., “student is being disruptive”), and it omitted objective complaints (Ex., “student brought a weapon to school”).

### The MDHR study found:

- Whereas **students of color** comprised only 49% of the entire student body, they were implicated in approximately **80%** of all subjective discipline incidents reported by staff in 2018-2019.
- Whereas **students with disabilities** comprised 14% of the student body, they were implicated **60%** of all subjective discipline incidents reported by staff in 2018-2019.

All students must be in school to learn. Here are advocacy tips for dealing with school discipline and discrimination. Refer to the [SMRLS' ELAP Handbook](#) for more information.

### Some Advocacy Tips for Discipline

**Request** the school's written records with regards to the discipline (*under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, schools must provide reasons in writing for suspensions or expulsions*).

**Verify** the length of time the student is being suspended from school (*indefinite suspensions are not permitted in Minnesota*).

**Ask** the school how it plans to offer alternative educational services for any dismissal lasting more than 5 consecutive days.

**Reach out** to an education advocate to discuss options for moving forward.

### Advocacy Tips for Students with an IEP

**Know** that the school must invite parents to a Manifestation Determination Review meeting when suspensions total 10 days or more during a school year.

**Discuss** whether the IEP (*Individualized Education Program*) was followed when the incident occurred.

**Determine** if the student's behavior was connected to their disability.

**Connect** with the IEP team to discuss improving the IEP to better support the student.

**Consider** whether the student should be re-evaluated to better understand their educational needs.

Also, students with IEPs may request from the **MN Dept. of Education (MDE)** an investigation into violations of the child's special education rights. The **MDE special education complaint form**:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/sped/conf/compl/index.htm>

### Reporting Discrimination in School

If there are concerns that a student has been discriminated against based on race, disability or gender, including through disciplinary actions by the school, reports may be filed to:

- **MN Department of Human Rights (MDHR)** to request an investigation within 1 yr. of the incidents. Call **MDHR's helpline: 833-454-0148**, or fill out **MDHR's online incident report**: <https://mn.gov/mdhr/intake/consultationinquiryform/>
- **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** within 6 months of the incidents. Call the **OCR Office: 312-730-1560**, or fill out **OCR's online complaint form**: <https://ocras.ed.gov/content/ocr-complaint-assessment-system>