

Setting the Stage for Universal Preschool

May 12, 2022

Emmanuel Prunty and Laura Hill



Supported with funding from the Sobrato Family Foundation



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

What is Transitional Kindergarten (TK)?

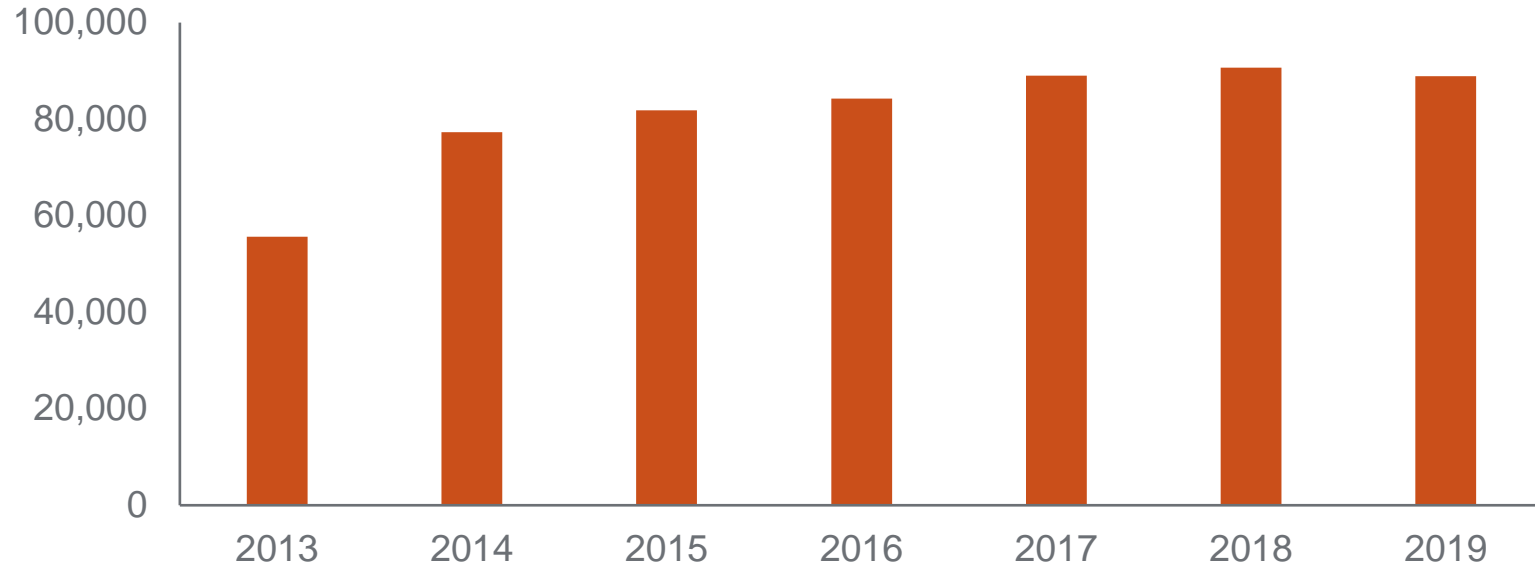
- California started TK in 2012–13 for children who turn 5 in the fall
 - Extra year of kindergarten
 - At least three hours a day
 - Sometimes held in kindergarten classrooms
- Teachers have BAs and early childhood education (ECE) units
- Every district serving kindergarteners must offer TK

Why TK matters now

- Eligibility will expand to all four-year-olds by 2025–26
 - Currently, about a quarter of four-year-olds are eligible
- Children arrive in kindergarten with a wide range of readiness
 - An extra year can help students who are not at grade level
 - California has lower rates of preschool attendance relative to other states
- Child care and preschool are helpful to families
 - Especially low-income, working families

TK eligibility and enrollment have expanded

TK enrollment

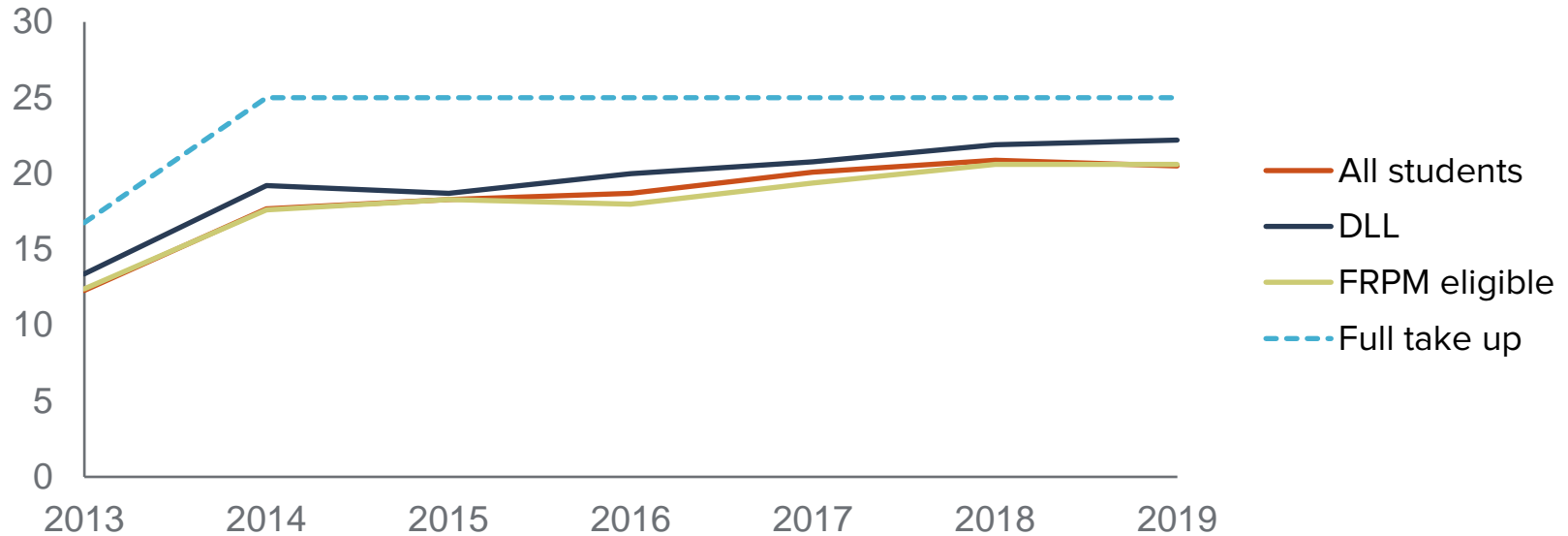


Research questions on the eve of expansion

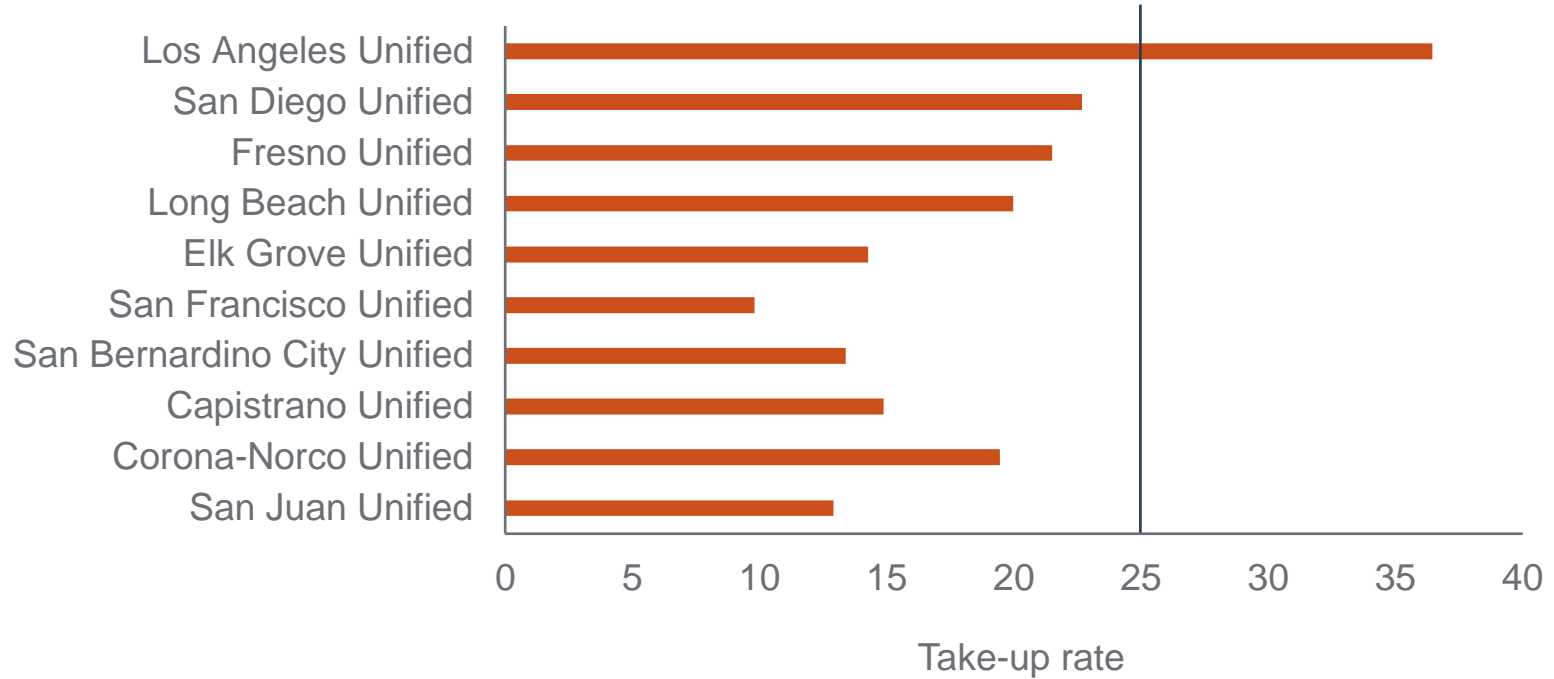
- What are the characteristics of students enrolled in TK?
 - Dual Language Learner (DLL) status
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Socioeconomic status
- What are the characteristics of districts and schools offering TK?
- What are the characteristics of families that appear likely to participate?
- Which equity gaps need to be addressed during TK expansion?

Dual Language Learners participate in TK at higher rates than students overall

State take-up rate without LA Unified

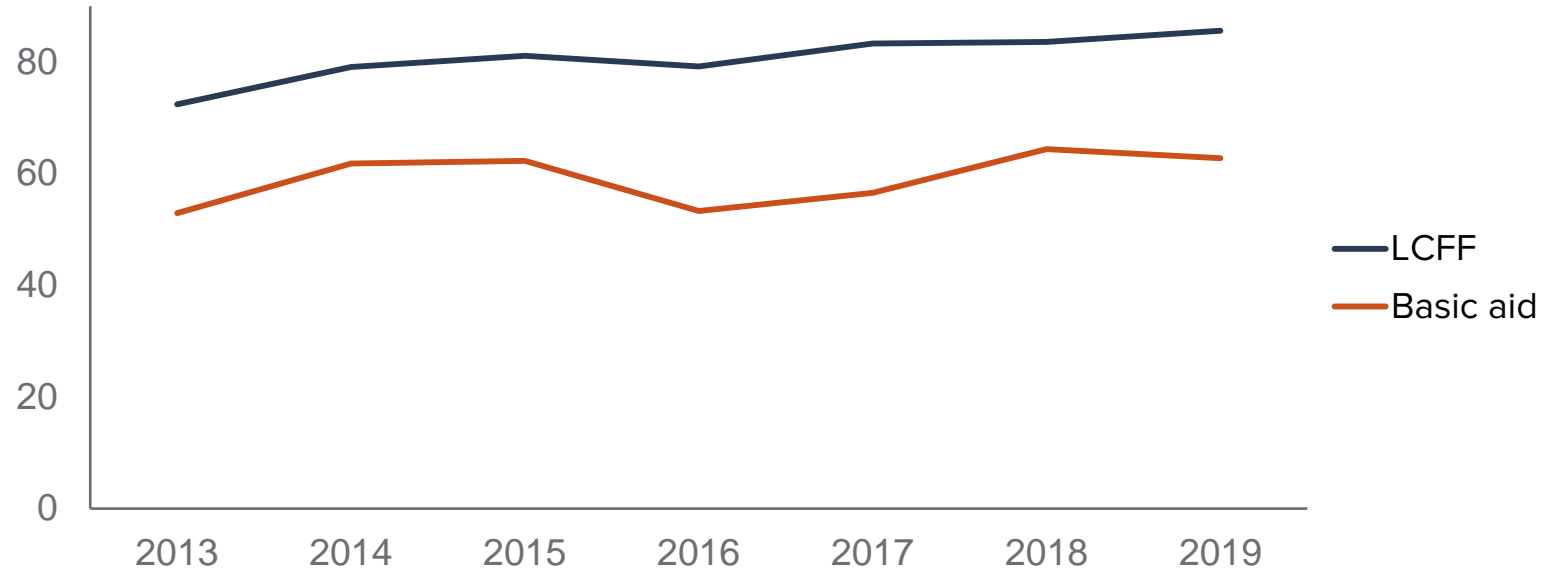


LA Unified has 17% of the state's TK students



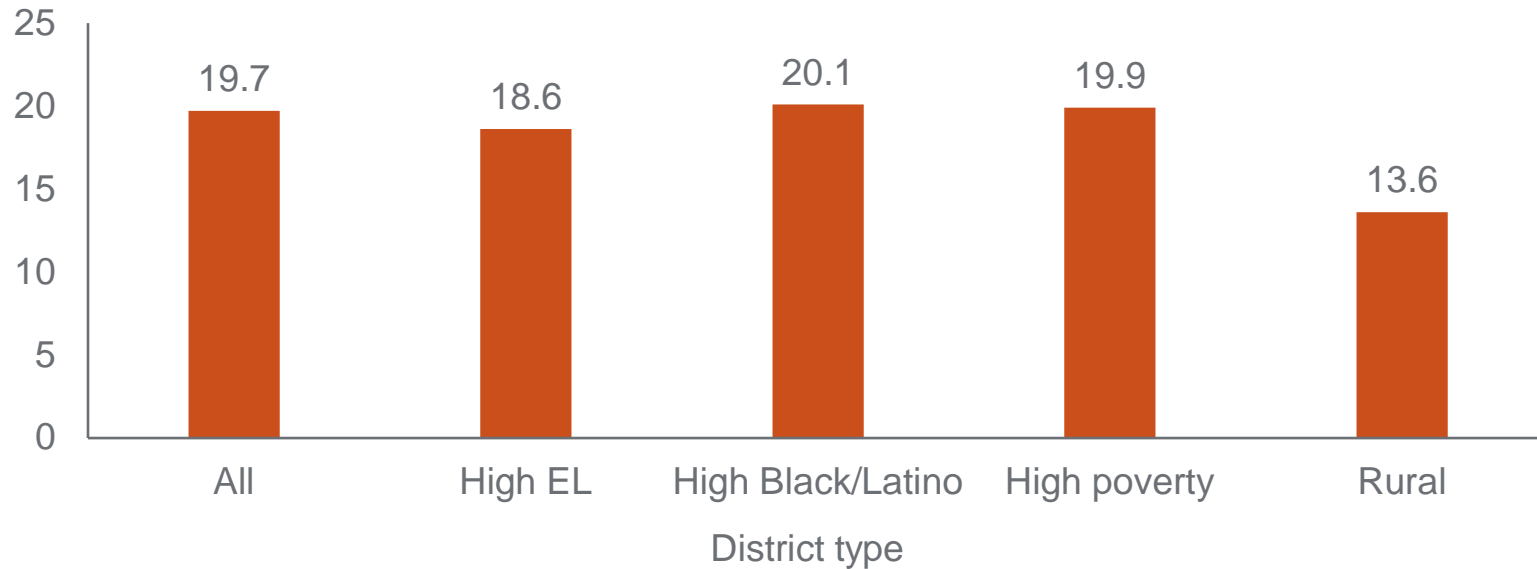
Not all districts provide TK

Share of districts providing TK



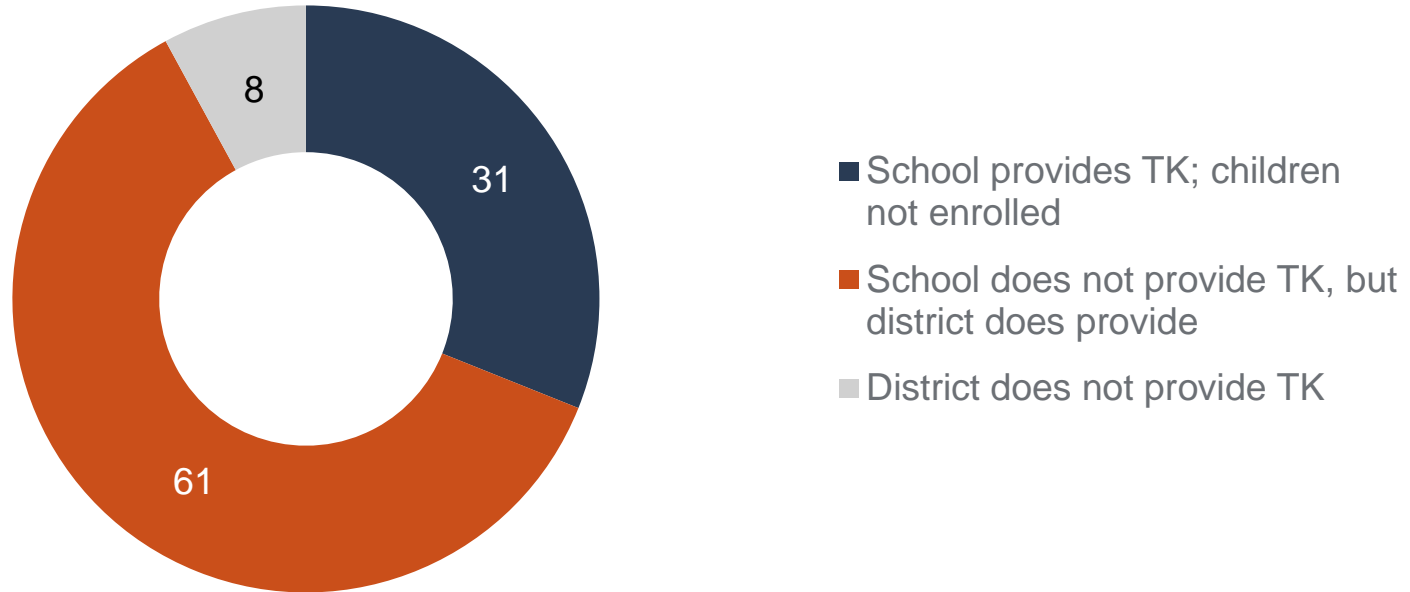
Dual Language Learners have low take-up rates in rural districts

TK take-up rate for Dual Language Learners



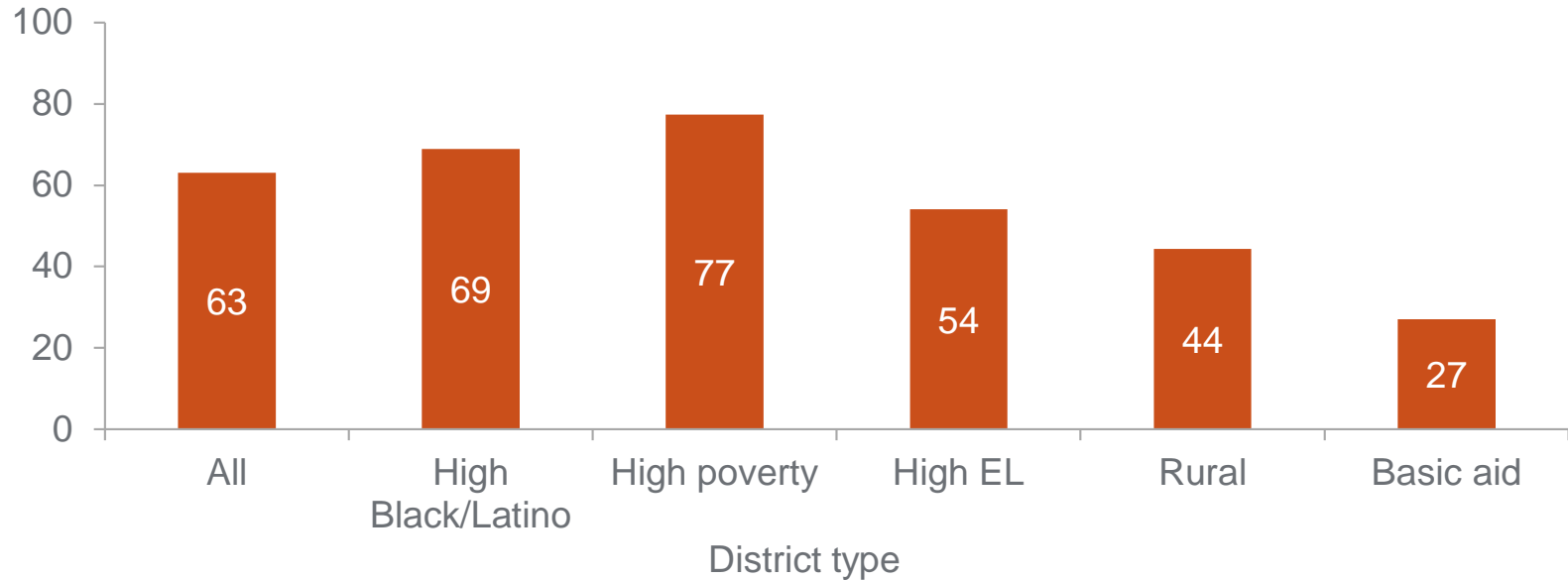
Most unserved students reside in districts offering TK but in school zones that do not

Percent of unserved students

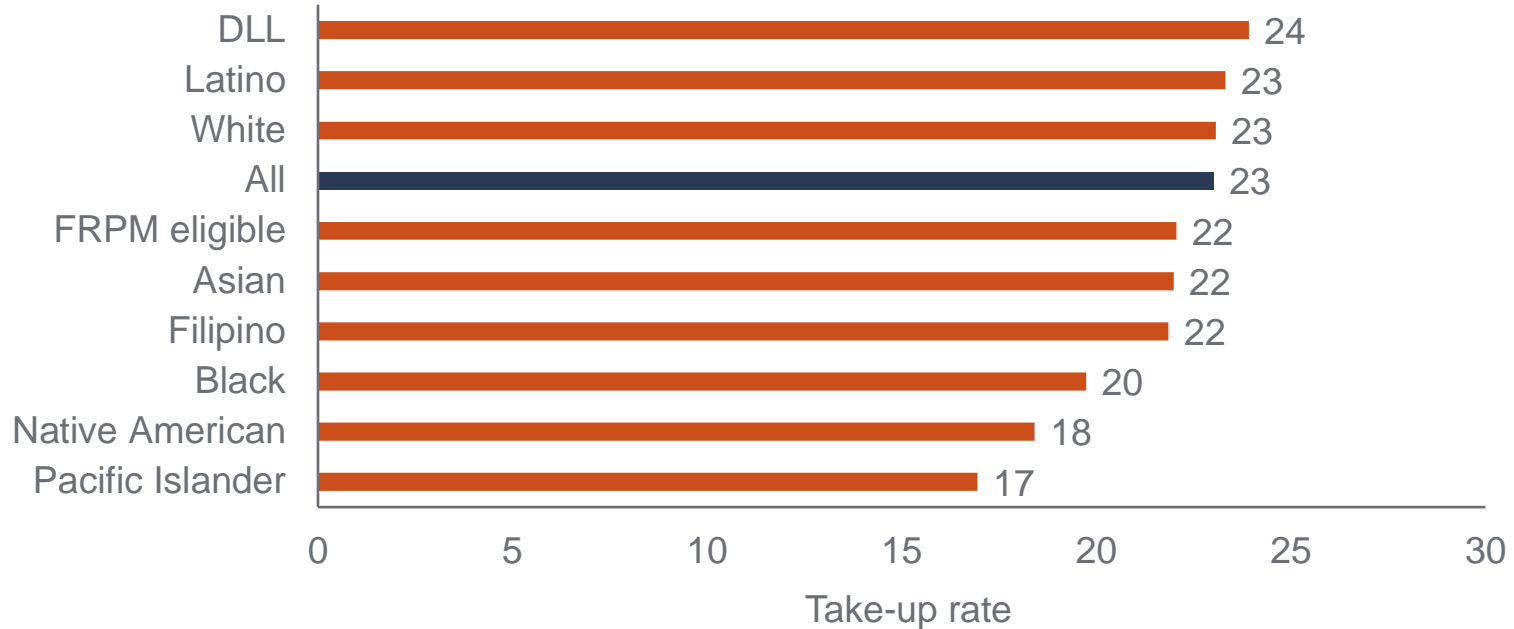


Basic-aid and rural districts are less likely to provide TK at the vast majority of their schools

Percent offering TK at 80% or more of their schools



Participation varies across groups even when TK is offered at students' schools



Conclusions

- Dual Language Learners and Latino children participate in TK in relatively high proportions
 - Due to high provision of TK in their districts and schools
- Students from low-income families participate at about the same rate as the average student
- Native American and Pacific Islander children appear underrepresented
 - More likely to attend districts and schools where TK is not offered
 - Participation appears low when their schools do offer TK

Recommendations

- Provide targeted outreach to groups with low participation, especially Pacific Islander and Native American families
- Report enrollment numbers for TK students with special needs
- Create more incentives for districts to provide TK
 - Consider accountability measures, such as including TK provision in the California School Dashboard
- Encourage rural districts to reach out to TK-eligible families
- Ensure that all schools offering kindergarten also provide TK

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Emmanuel Prunty (prunty@ppic.org; 415-291-4431)

Thank you for your interest in this work.