



School Mobility for Students in Foster Care

Trends from 2017–18 to 2023–24

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Agenda



Introduction



Data and Methods



Key Findings



Next Steps



Demo: Interactive
Maps for Counties
and Districts



Q & A

Background



Nearly **40,000 students** enrolled in TK-12 California schools are in foster care during the 2023–24 school year.



Students in foster care face significant challenges to school success (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), including...

- Frequent school moves
- Developmental delays
- Trauma from abuse, neglect, and separation from families



As a result, students in foster care have **poor educational outcomes** (Barrat, et al., 2025)

Background, continued



Under federal and state law, students in foster care have the right to remain in their school of origin—unless it is determined not to be in their best interest.



There has been limited data to guide state and local efforts. For example:

Where are students moving from and to?

What types of schools are they moving from and to?

How does school mobility vary based on student characteristics?



We formed a partnership to examine these questions.

Meet the team



Kelsey Berryman



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Emily Casillas



Katherine Elliott



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Team Mascot

We ask three key questions

How many students in foster care move schools in a school year?

- How often do they move?
- How far are they moving?
- What kind of schools are they moving from and to?

How does school mobility vary over time and across student groups?

What factors are associated with school mobility?

- Individual factors: race/ethnicity, gender, age/grade, educational needs
- School factors: student demographics, student needs
- Community factors: geographic location (e.g., urban, rural), poverty, crime rates, housing affordability, foster care infrastructure

Key terms and data sources

Foster care

- A student is in foster care at some point in the school year

School mobility

- A student changes schools during the school year, based on primary enrollment

Residence mobility

- A student changes residence, determined by zip codes, during the school year

Data Source

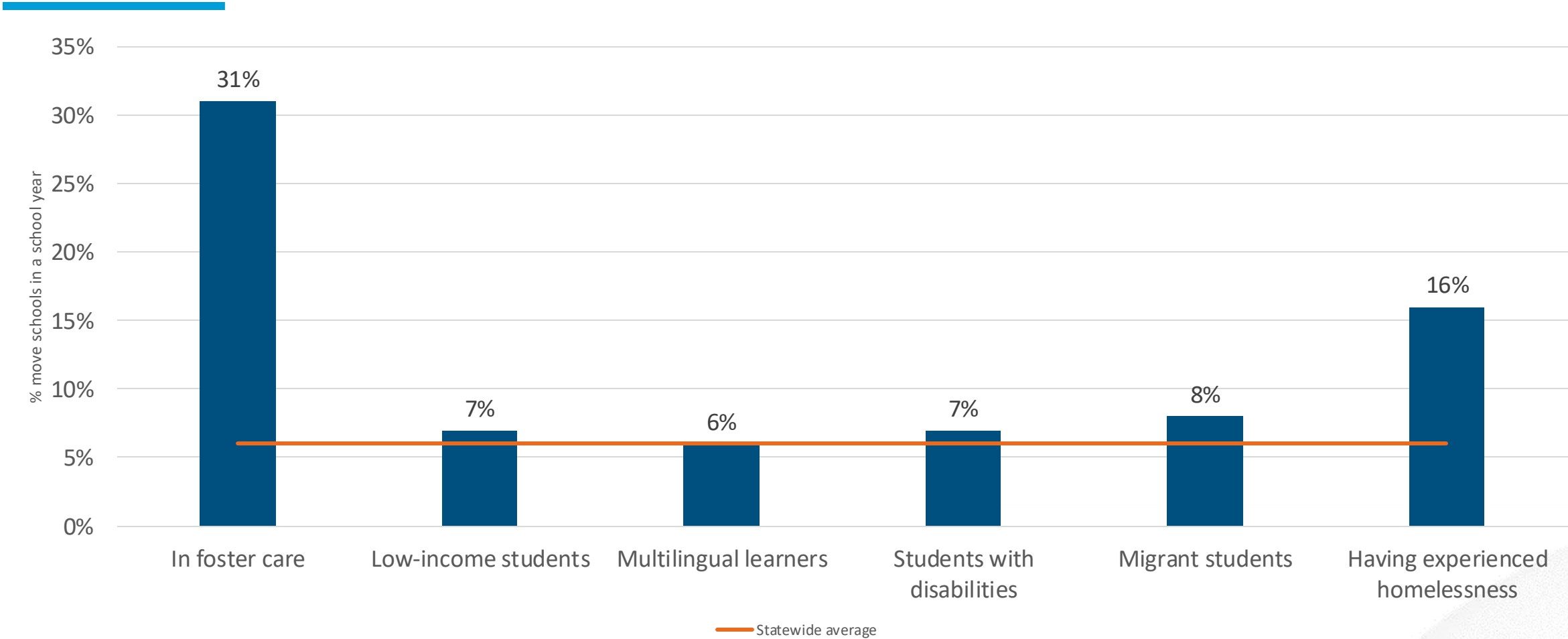
- California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), 2017–18 to 2023–24

Study Limitations

- No information on county of jurisdiction for students in foster care
- No information on out-of-state, private schools, out-of-country moves
- No information on foster care experience (e.g., length in care, placements, service types)
- No information on timing of residence changes

How many students in foster care move schools in a school year?

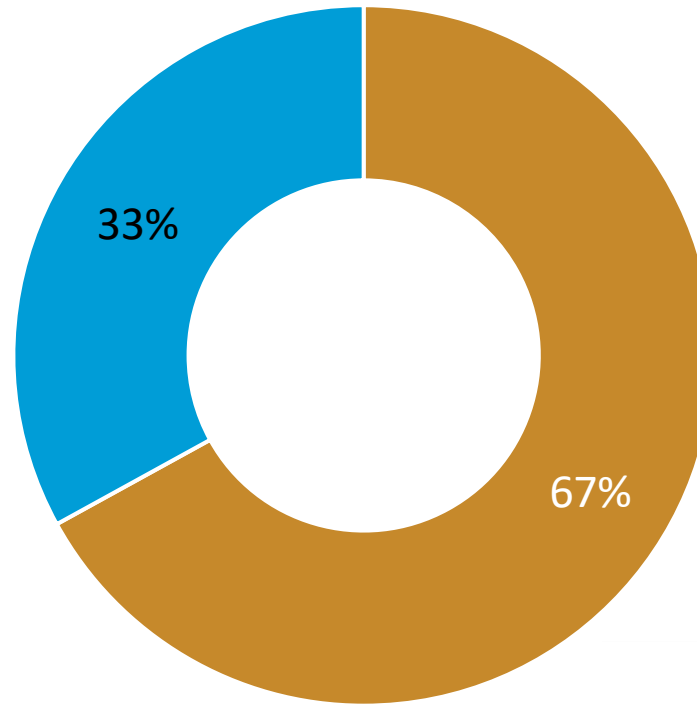
31% students in foster care move schools in a school year



Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24

Note. Students in each groups are identified based on whether they were ever part of that student group during the year.

Two thirds of school moves are associated with residence changes

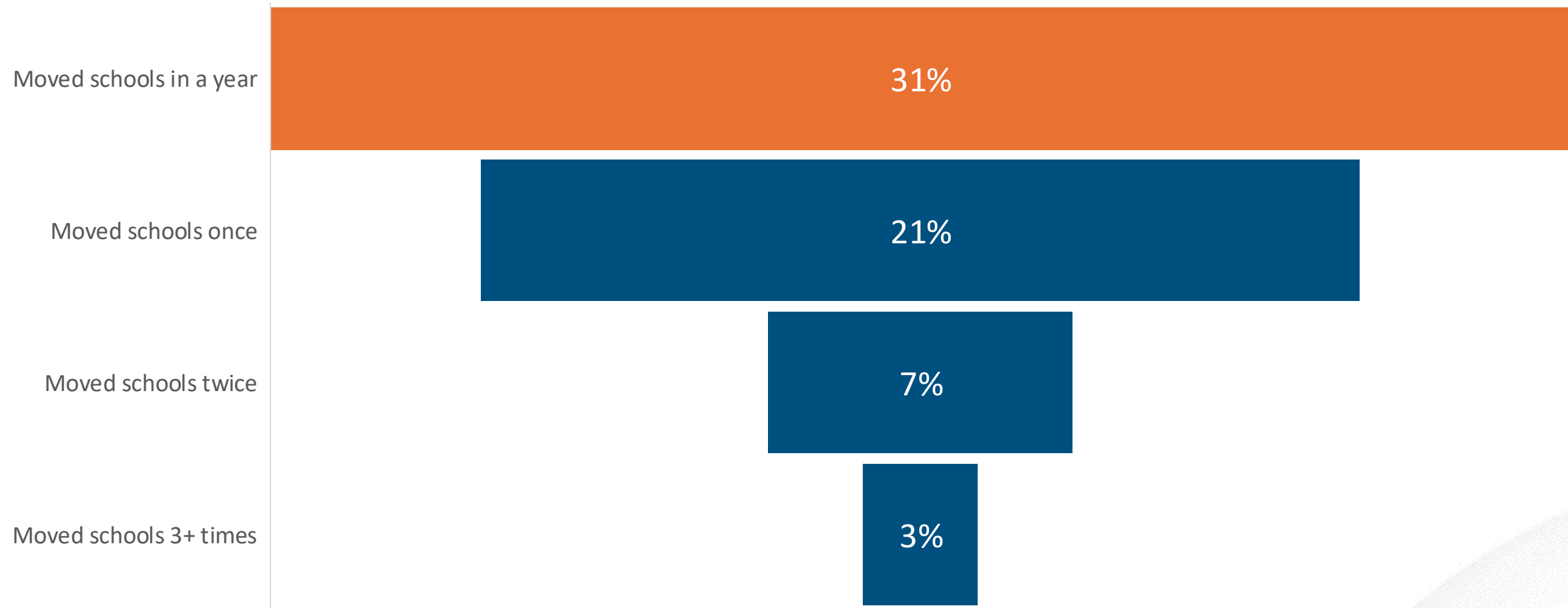


■ % school moves with a residence change

■ % school moves not associated with a residence change

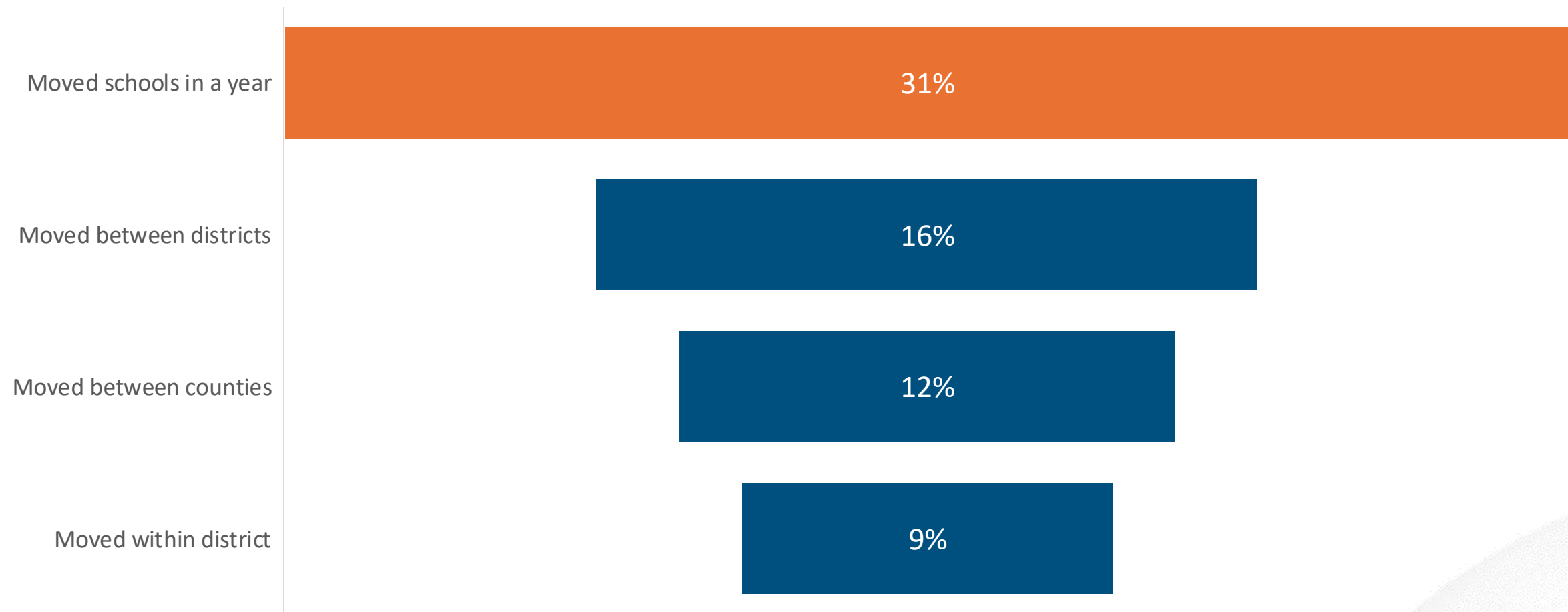
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

One in ten students in foster care move at least twice in a year



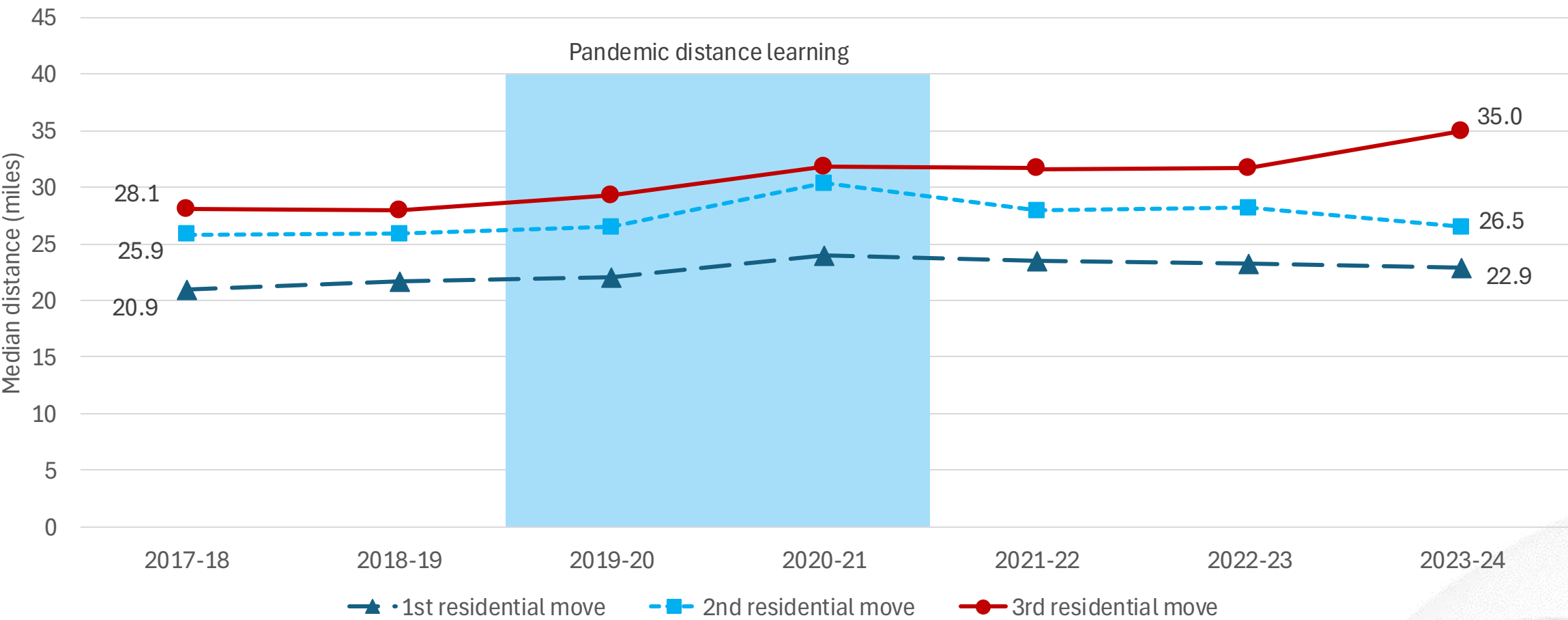
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

More students move to different districts and counties, instead of staying in the same district



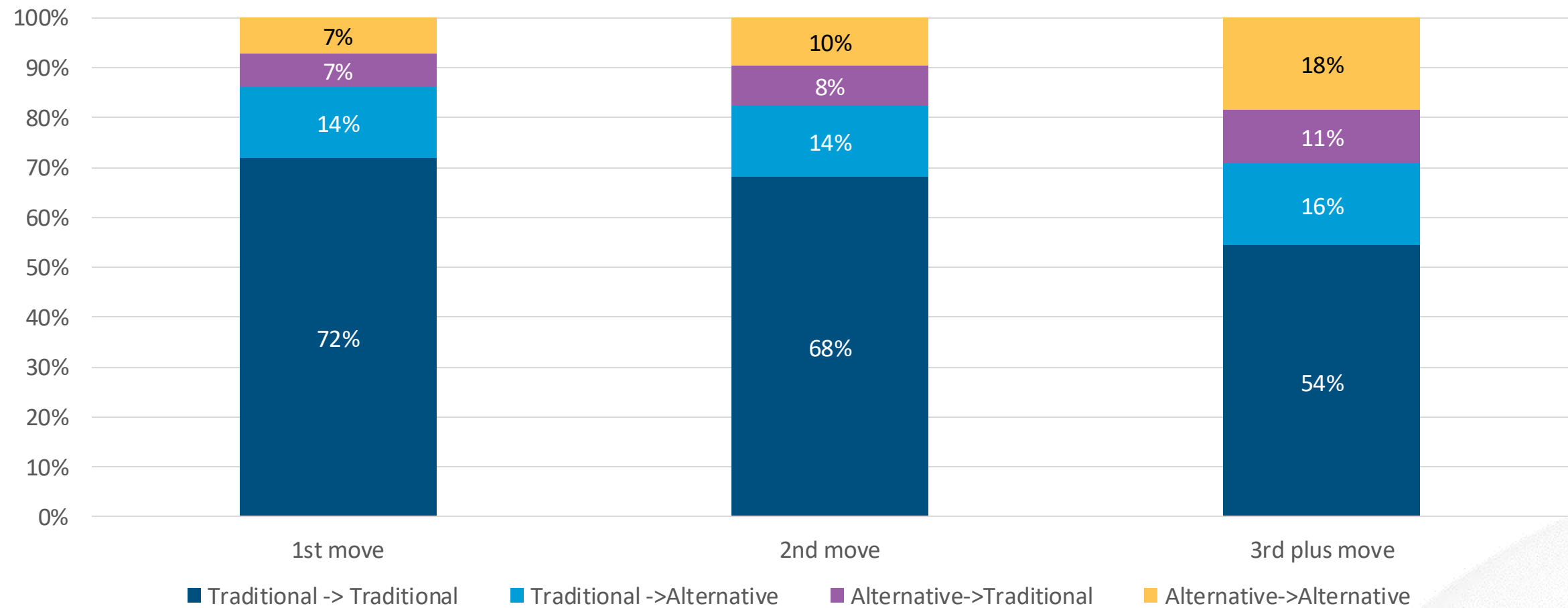
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

Typically, students relocate over 20 miles away



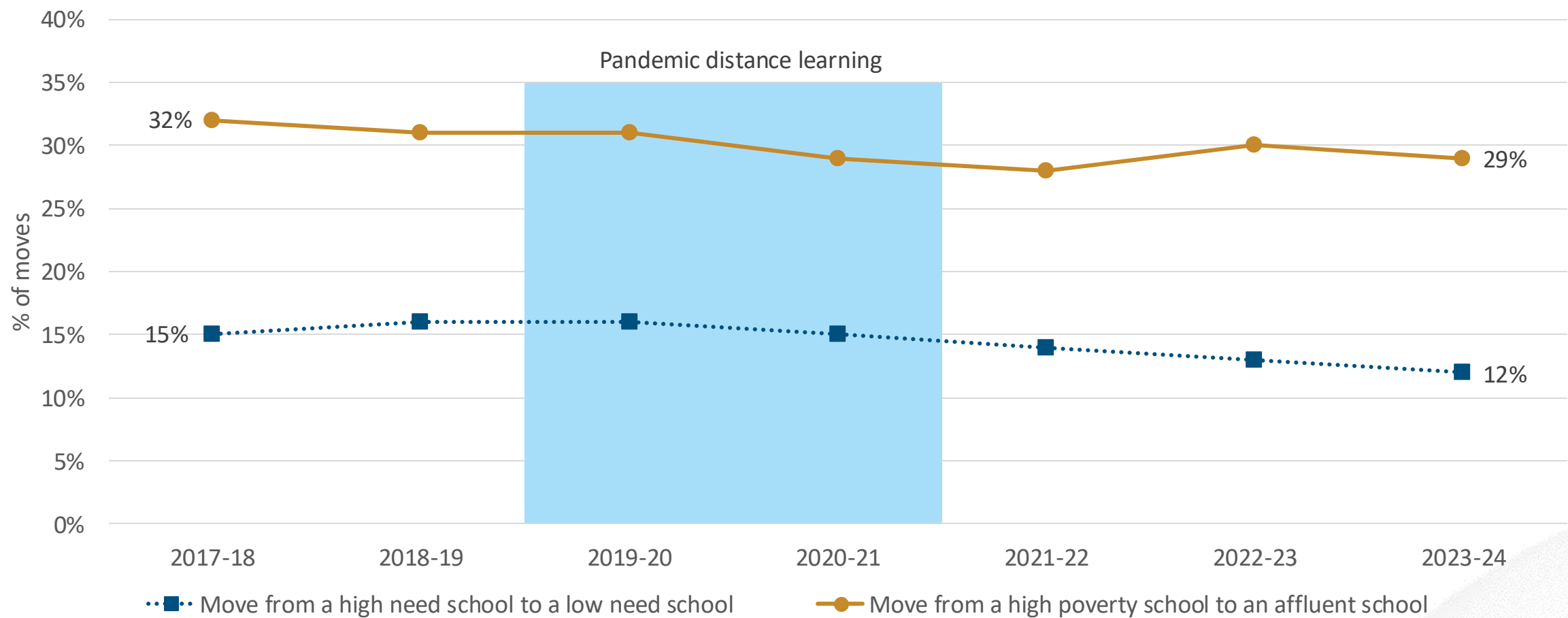
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

Subsequent moves are more likely to move between alternative settings



Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

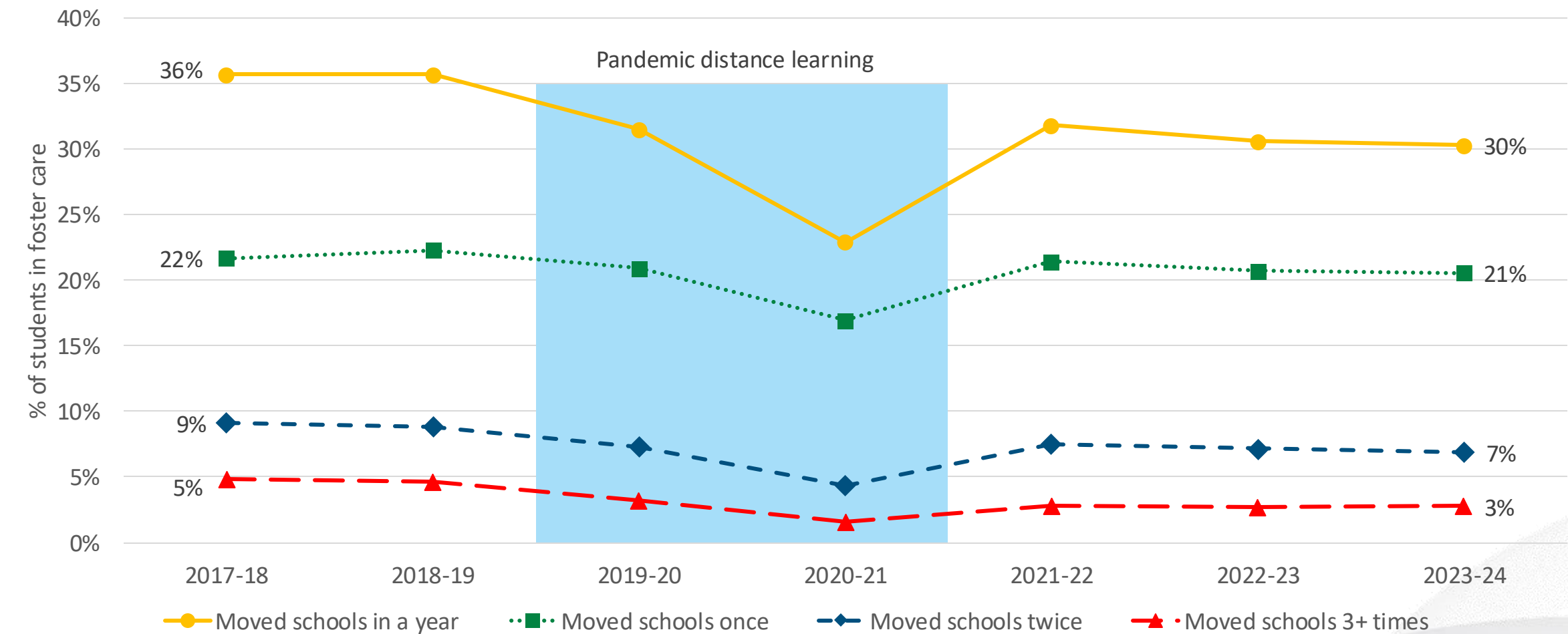
Sometimes students move to better resourced schools



Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

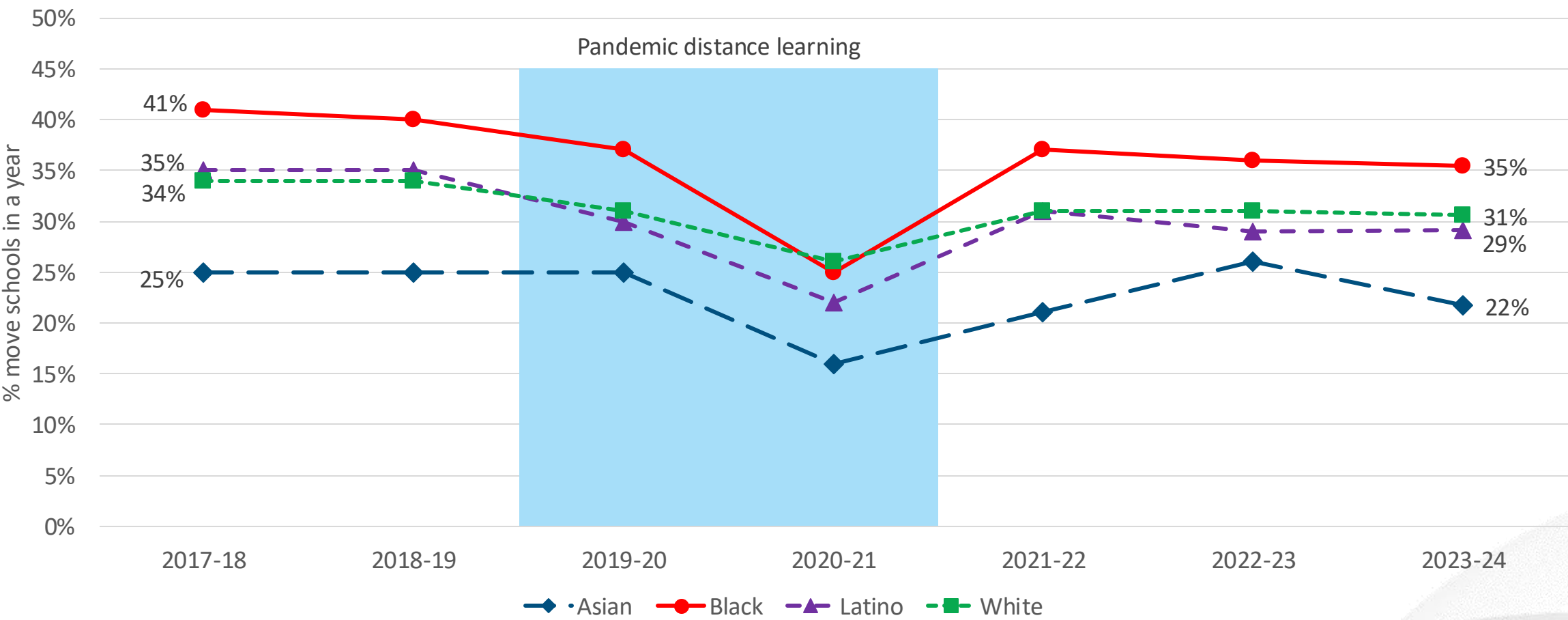
How does school mobility vary over time and across student groups?

School mobility declines over time



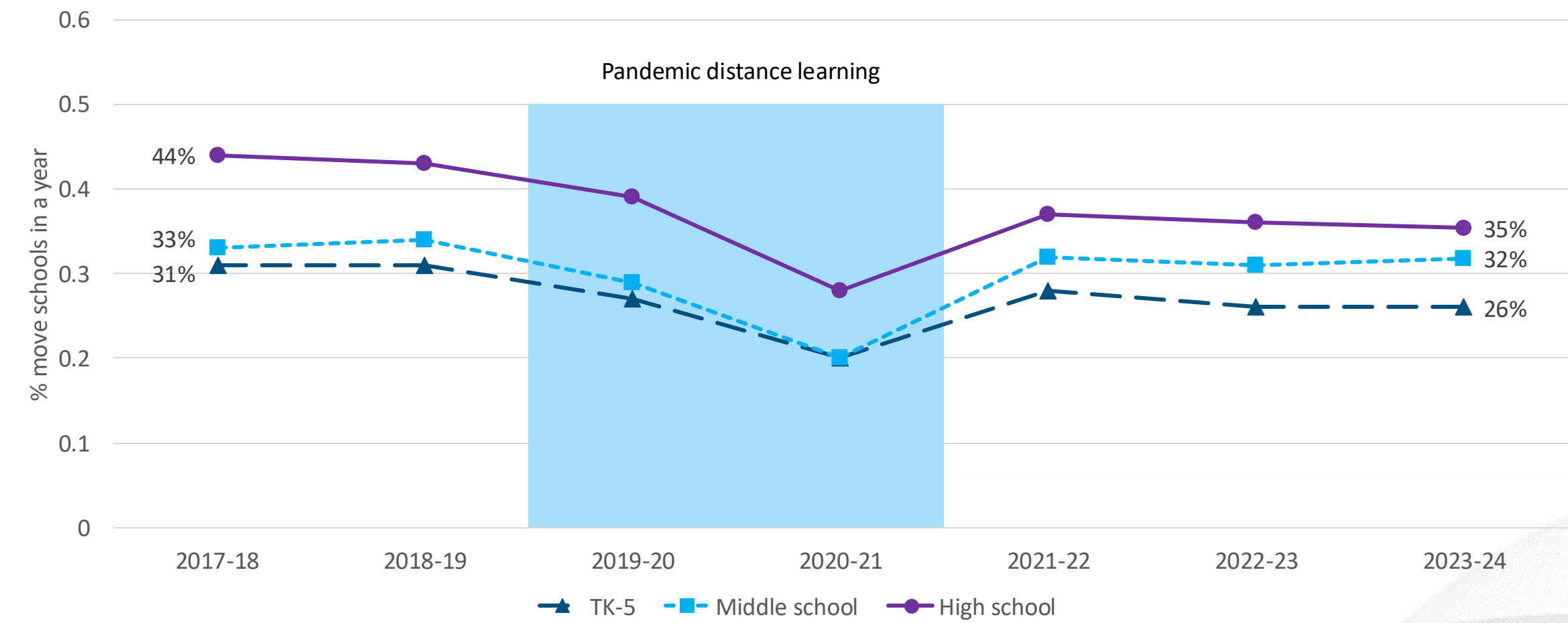
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

Black students in foster care switch schools more often



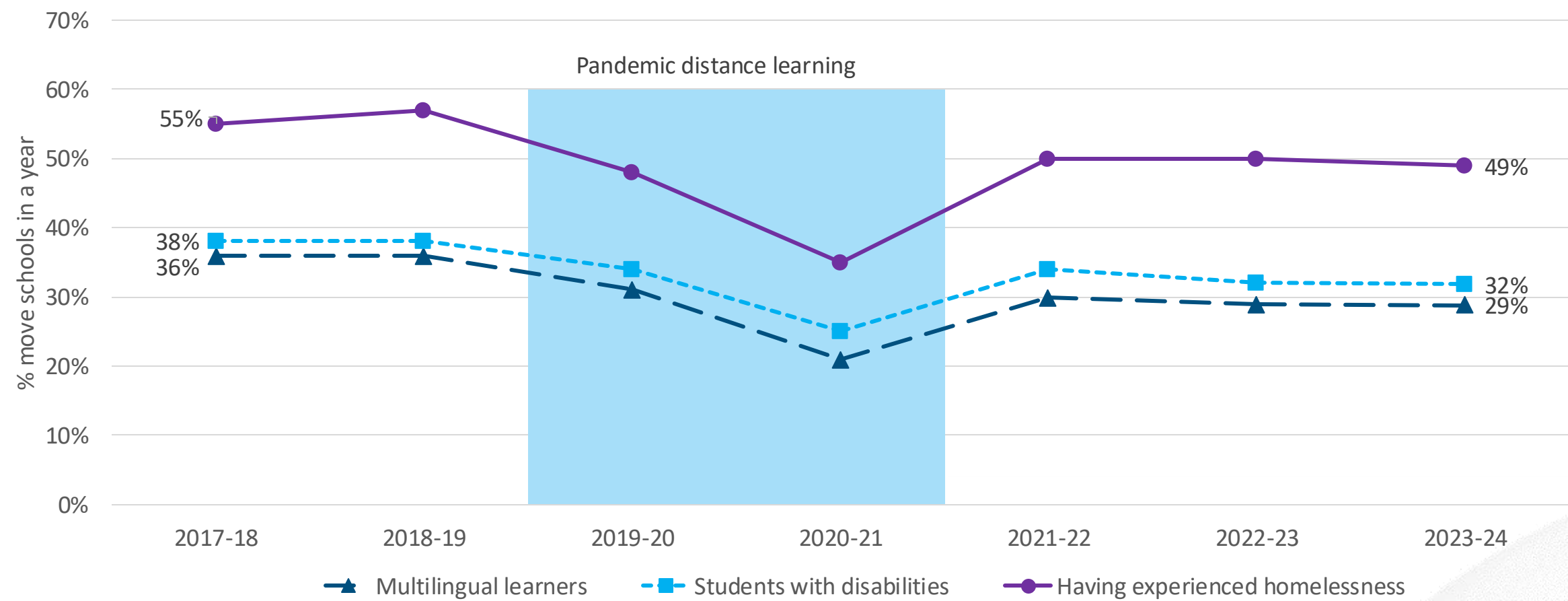
Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

Older students tend to move more frequently



Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

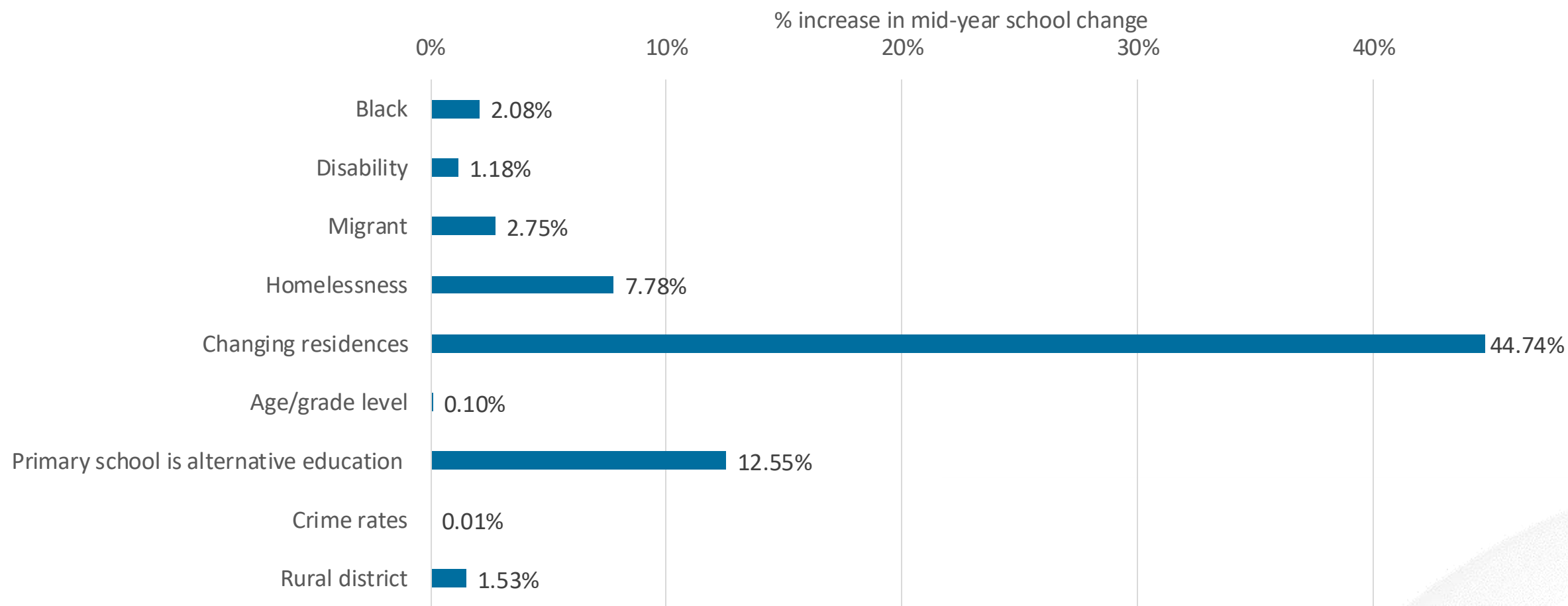
Students having experienced homelessness have the highest mobility rates



Source: CALPADS, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

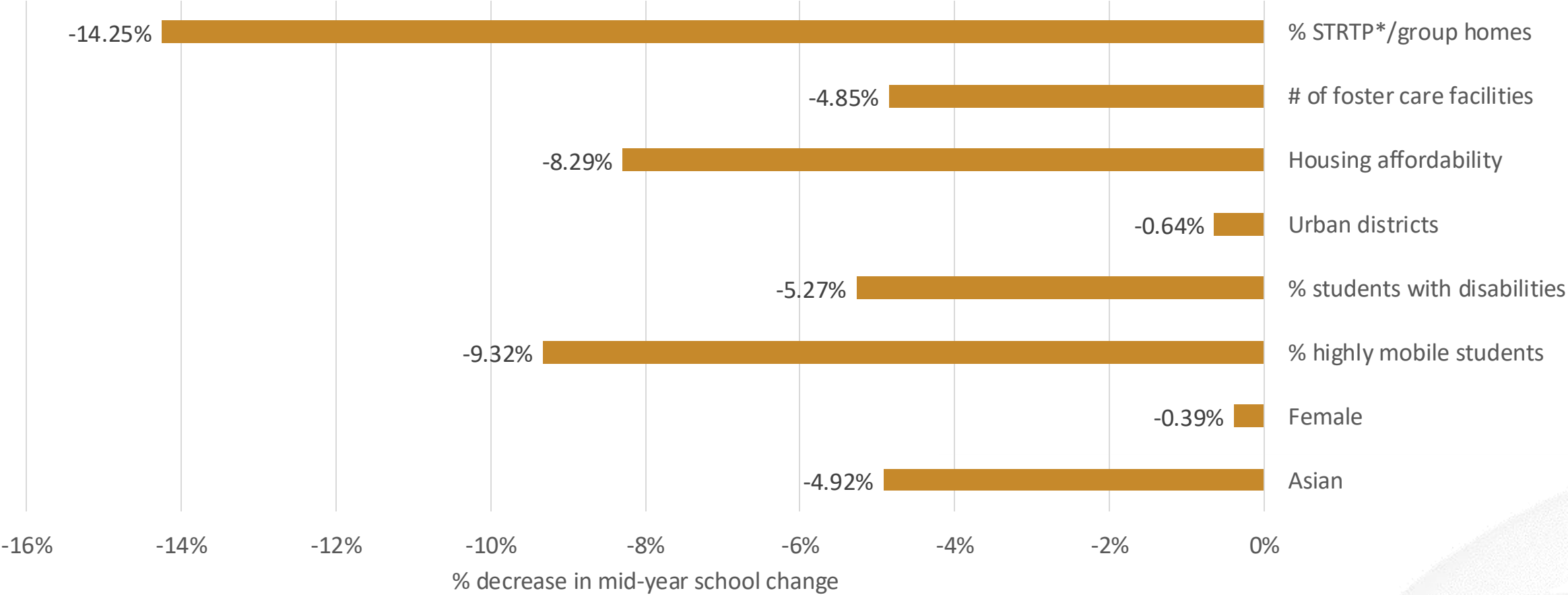
What factors are associated with school mobility?

Factors associated with higher school mobility



Source: CALPADS, California Department of Justice, National Association of Realtors, California Department of Social Services, Census Bureau, 2017–18 to 2023–24.

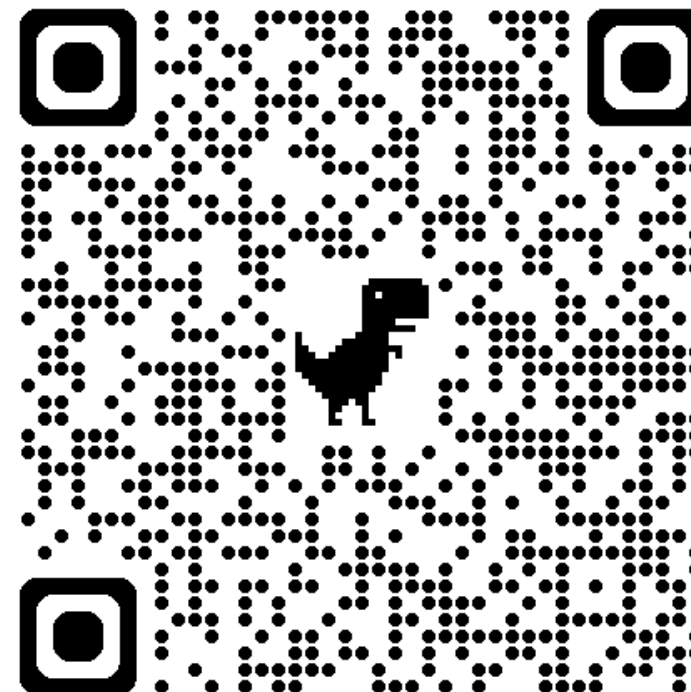
Factors associated with lower school mobility



Source: CALPADS, California Department of Justice, National Association of Realtors, California Department of Social Services, Census Bureau, 2017–18 to 2023–24.
*Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program

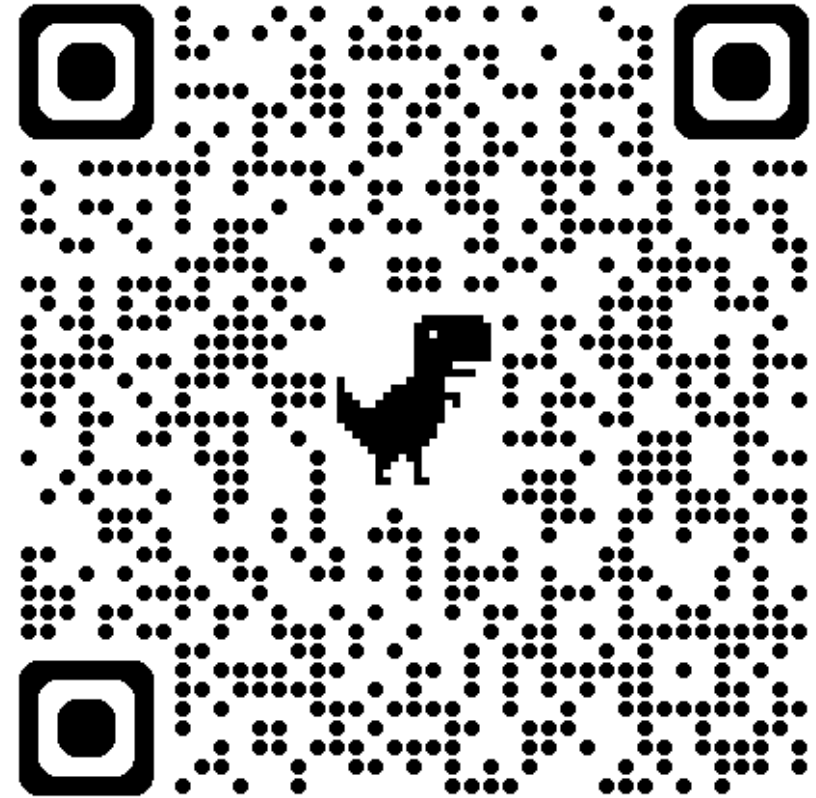


Demo: Interactive Map



Resources

1. Infographic on school mobility: trends over time
2. Infographic on school mobility: variation across student groups
3. Research report *School Mobility for Students in Foster Care*
4. Interactive data on school mobility for counties and districts



Q & A



Contact the Presenters



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THANK YOU!

SCHOOL MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

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