PASO ROBLES
JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Every Student Valued, Empowered, and Ready to Thrive

SUPERINTENDENT: JENNIFER A. LOFTUS
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PRJUSD Graduation Rate Reaches Six-Year High as New State Data Shows Significant Student Progress

Graduation rate climbs to 94.5%, suspensions fall to six-year low, and key student groups demonstrate measurable gains

PASO ROBLES, Calif. (November 4, 2026) — Paso Robles Joint Unified School District is celebrating significant gains in student achievement, graduation rates, and school climate following the release of the 2026 California School Dashboard data. Among the most notable findings, the District's graduation rate climbed to 94.5%, its highest level in six years, while student suspensions fell to their lowest rate over the same period.

The District's 2026 graduation rate represents a 6.1-percentage-point increase over the previous year and exceeds the statewide rate of 88.1% by 6.4 percentage points. The achievement places PRJUSD in the Dashboard's highest performance category, Blue, for graduation.

At the same time, the District's suspension rate declined from 3.0% in 2025 to 2.1% in 2026, below the statewide rate of 2.7%. Eight student groups earned Green ratings for suspension rates, while one earned Blue.

The decline in suspensions does not mean the District is relaxing disciplinary standards or that students are no longer held accountable for their behavior. Rather, it reflects a more comprehensive approach to student behavior that combines clear expectations, meaningful consequences, and targeted support.

Through increased staff training and a strengthened commitment to Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), PRJUSD is working to address behavioral challenges before they escalate. These approaches help staff identify students who may need additional support and provide targeted interventions that address the underlying causes of behavior. Suspensions remain an important disciplinary option, but the goal is to balance accountability with intervention, recognizing that removing a student from school is not always the most effective way to improve behavior.

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Campus safety and accountability are also reinforced through the District's partnership with the Paso Robles Police Department. Both Lewis Flamson Junior High and Paso Robles High School have full-time School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to their campuses, working alongside school administrators and campus supervision staff. In addition to helping maintain a safe learning environment, SROs build positive relationships with students and reinforce expectations for appropriate behavior. Serious misconduct involving fighting, weapons, or drugs results in both school disciplinary consequences and law enforcement citations.

District staff have also observed encouraging changes in student behavior following the implementation of more restrictive cell phone policies at both secondary campuses. At Lewis Flamson, students secure their phones in locked Yondr pouches throughout the school day. At Paso Robles High School, cell phone use is prohibited during instructional time and passing periods, although students may use their devices before and after school and during lunch. While these observations are anecdotal, staff report that reducing access to phones during the school day has helped minimize distractions and some of the conflicts that can arise from student device use.

Together, these efforts reflect PRJUSD's commitment to maintaining safe, orderly schools where students are held accountable for their actions while receiving the guidance and support they need to make better choices and remain engaged in their education.

"These results reflect the tremendous dedication of our students, educators, staff, and families," said PRJUSD Superintendent Jennifer Loftus. "Seeing more students graduate, more students receive the interventions and support they need, and meaningful gains among student groups where we have focused improvement efforts is incredibly encouraging. While we know there is always room to grow, these results tell us we are making important progress. Our responsibility now is to build on that momentum and continue working to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed."

Significant Gains for Students with Disabilities

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Students with disabilities demonstrated some of the District's most encouraging improvements, moving up in five California School Dashboard performance indicators—the most of any student group.

Notable gains included:

- Graduation Rate: Orange to Green
- Suspension Rate: Orange to Green
- College/Career Readiness: Red to Yellow
- Mathematics: Red to Orange
- Science: Orange to Yellow

These improvements reflect progress across academic achievement, postsecondary readiness, and school climate, while highlighting the importance of continued support for students with diverse learning needs.

English Learners Demonstrate Academic Progress

PRJUSD also saw encouraging gains among its English Learner population.

Long-term English Learners—students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for an extended period without yet achieving English proficiency—improved across four Dashboard indicators: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Suspension Rate. All four indicators moved out of the Red performance category, with Suspension Rate advancing two levels to Yellow.

Additionally, 57.9% of long-term English Learners made progress toward English language proficiency, an increase of 12.5 percentage points over the previous year and above the statewide rate of 54.1%. This result placed the student group in the Dashboard's highest performance category, Blue, for English Learner Progress.

Students who had been reclassified as fluent English proficient also demonstrated encouraging academic achievement. On the 2025–26 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), 49% of reclassified students scored Proficient or Advanced in English Language Arts, compared with 42.8% of students districtwide.

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Lewis Flamson Junior High Improves Across Every Indicator

At Lewis Flamson Junior High School, students achieved improvements across all six color-rated Dashboard indicators, with no indicators remaining unchanged or declining from the previous year.

English Language Arts and Mathematics each advanced from Orange to Yellow, while Science improved from Yellow to Green and Chronic Absenteeism moved from Red to Orange.

Two indicators showed particularly strong gains, jumping two performance levels:

- English Learner Progress: Orange to Green
- Suspension Rate: Orange to Green

The results represent broad-based improvement across academic performance, student engagement, and school climate.

Building on the Progress

The California School Dashboard is the state's accountability system for public schools and districts. It provides information about how schools and student groups are performing across multiple measures, including academic achievement, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, and suspension rates.

While the latest results highlight significant progress, District leaders recognize that some performance indicators and student groups continue to face challenges. PRJUSD remains focused on strengthening instructional practices, supporting students' academic and social-emotional needs, and using performance data to guide ongoing improvement.

"Every student represented in these numbers has a story, and behind every improvement are educators, support staff, and families working together to help that student succeed," Loftus added. "We're proud of what our school communities have accomplished, and we're equally committed to the work that lies ahead."

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For more information about PRJUSD's performance, visit the California School Dashboard at https://www.caschooldashboard.org/.

About Paso Robles Joint Unified School District

Paso Robles Joint Unified School District serves approximately 6,200 students throughout northern San Luis Obispo County. Guided by its core values of integrity, accountability, collaboration, innovation, compassion, and belonging, PRJUSD is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where every student feels valued and empowered to discover their strengths, build resilience, and develop the knowledge, character, and confidence to thrive in their future.

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