



Online Learning Helps Narrow Achievement Gaps in Student Performance

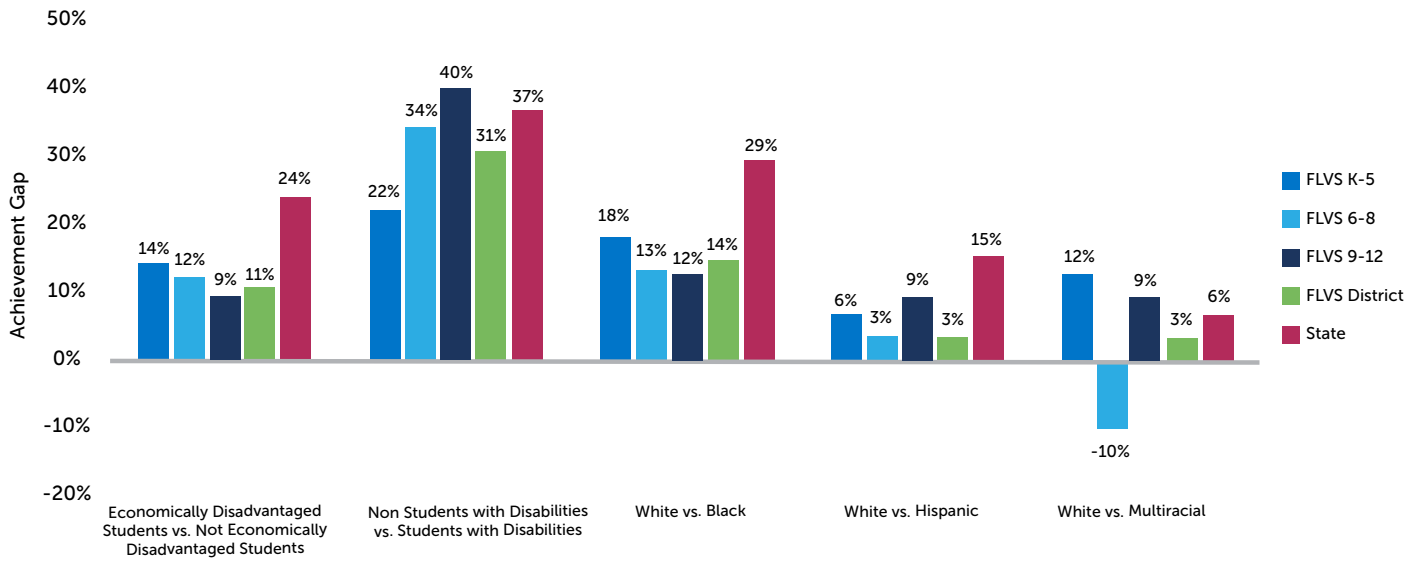
An achievement gap refers to a significant disparity in academic performance between two groups of students. This report looks at the results from standardized Florida assessments and End-of-Course exams for the 2020-21 school year across several subjects, comparing student performance between Florida Virtual School (FLVS) Full Time students, and students across the state of Florida. The report focuses on student subgroups of race, socioeconomic status, and disability status.

Using data from the Florida Department of Education, FLVS Analysis, Assessment, and Accountability team calculated the achievement gaps among these subgroups on statewide tests of English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies, and science knowledge. The gap was calculated by subtracting the percent of the minority subgroup who scored at a proficient level or higher (Levels 3-5) from the percent of the majority group who scored at a proficient level or higher on state tests. For example, if 55% of Black students scored at proficient or above and 58% of White students scored at proficient or above, the Black-White achievement gap would be calculated as 3%.

[The combination of its instructional model, certified teachers, professional development, and ability to offer students a personalized educational journey has allowed FLVS to successfully narrow achievement gaps across core subjects.](#)

The achievement gaps among students enrolled in FLVS Full Time are consistently lower than students across the state, especially for mathematics, and when comparing White and Black students. The largest achievement gaps tend to be among students with and without disabilities, while the smallest gaps tend to be among students who identify as multiracial as compared to White.

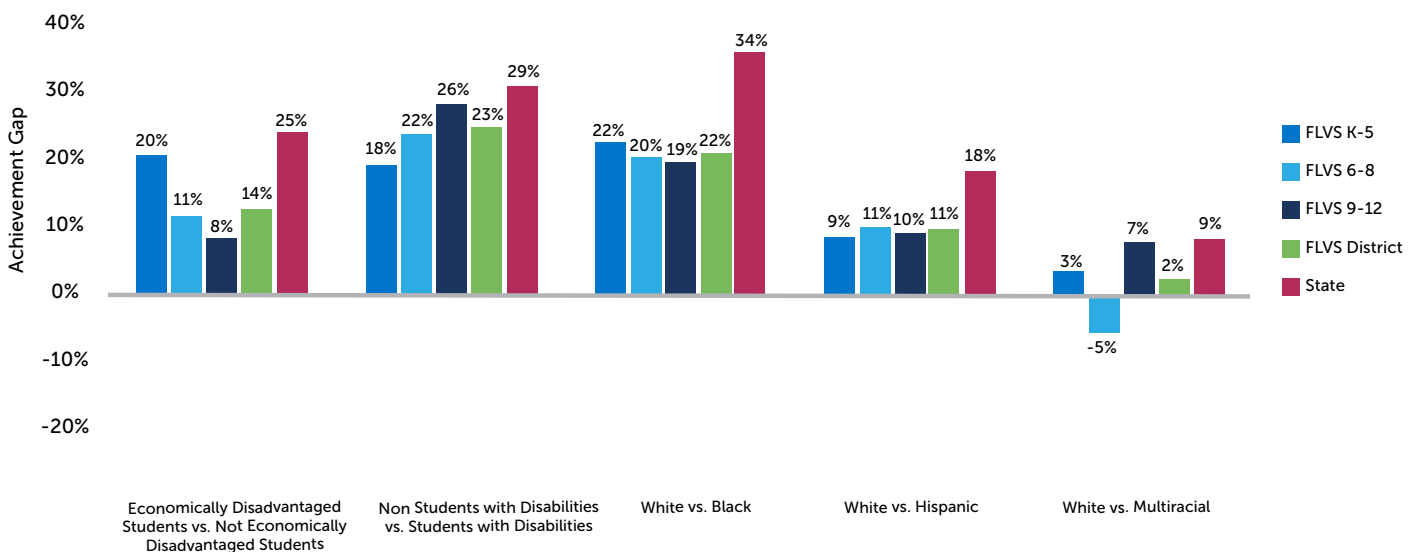
Florida Standards Assessment English Language Arts (ELA) 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

- The largest gaps in ELA achievement tend to be between students with and without disabilities.
- The gap for students with and without disabilities grows as children get older.
- The achievement gaps among students at FLVS are consistently less than half of the gap at the state level across all subgroups, except for students with disabilities.

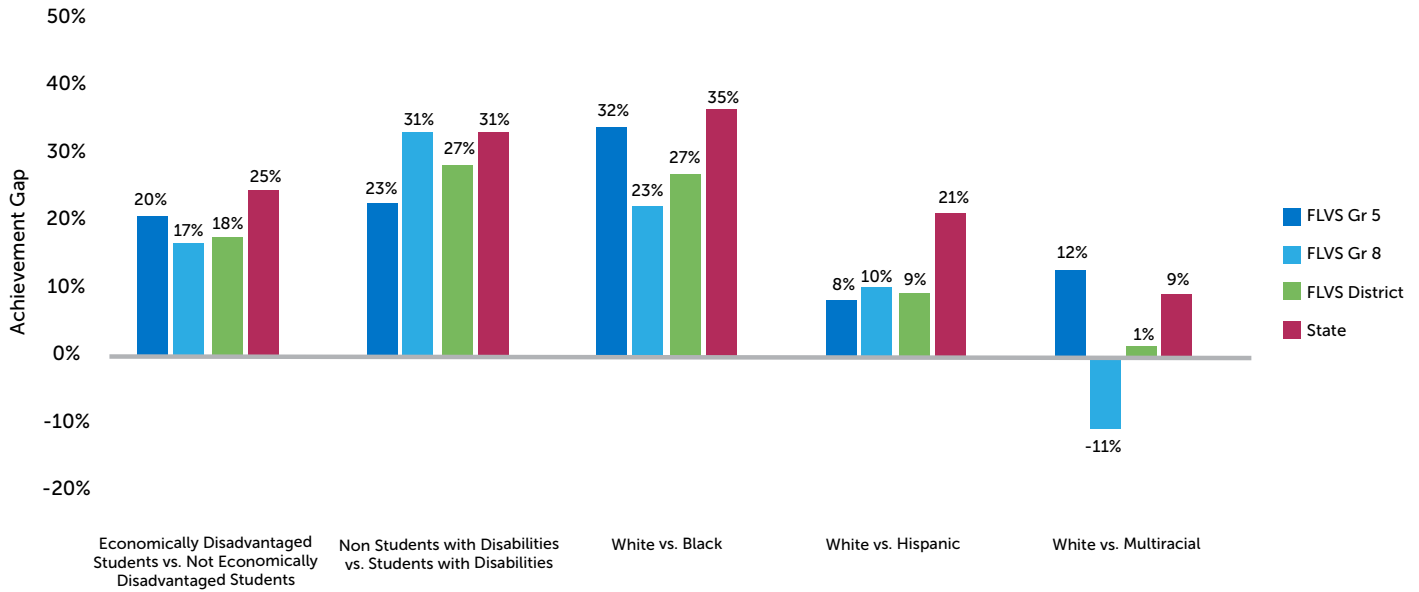
Combined Mathematics: Florida Standards Assessment Mathematics and Math End-of-Course Assesments 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

- The mathematics achievement gap is smaller for FLVS students than statewide across all categories, and this difference is most pronounced when comparing White and Black students.
- As with ELA, the mathematics achievement gap for students with disabilities grows as children get older.

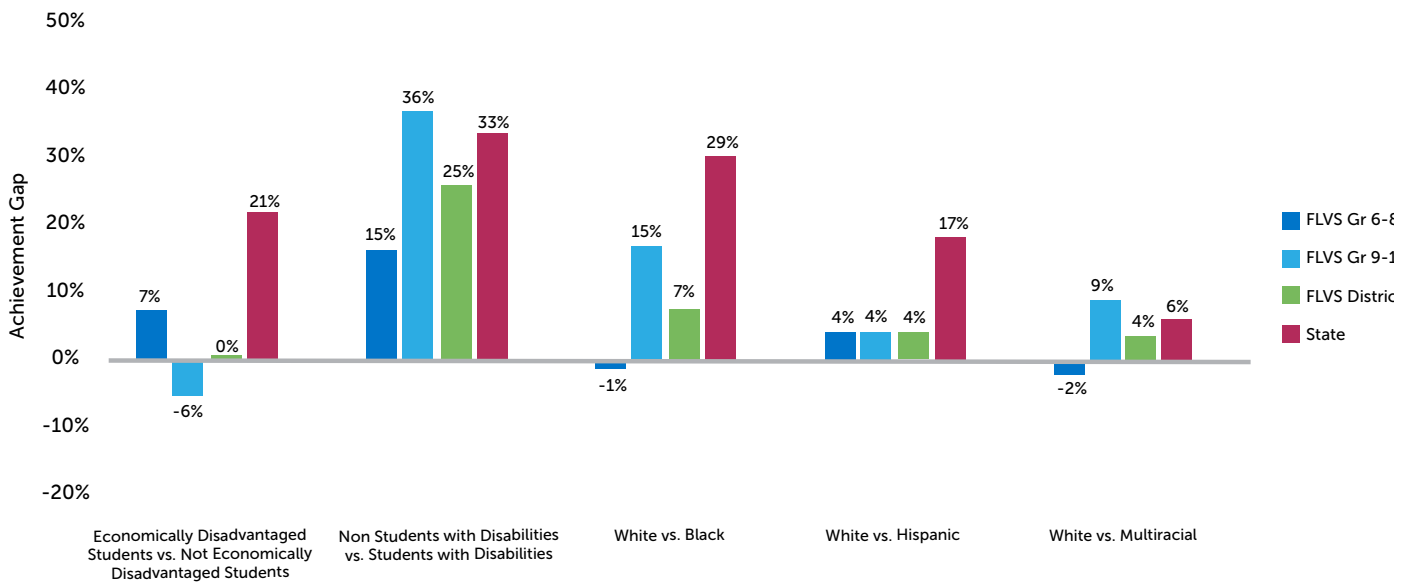
Science: Grades 5 and 8 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

The science achievement gap among Grade 5 and 8 students is smaller for FLVS students than statewide across all subgroups, with the exception of students with and without disabilities.

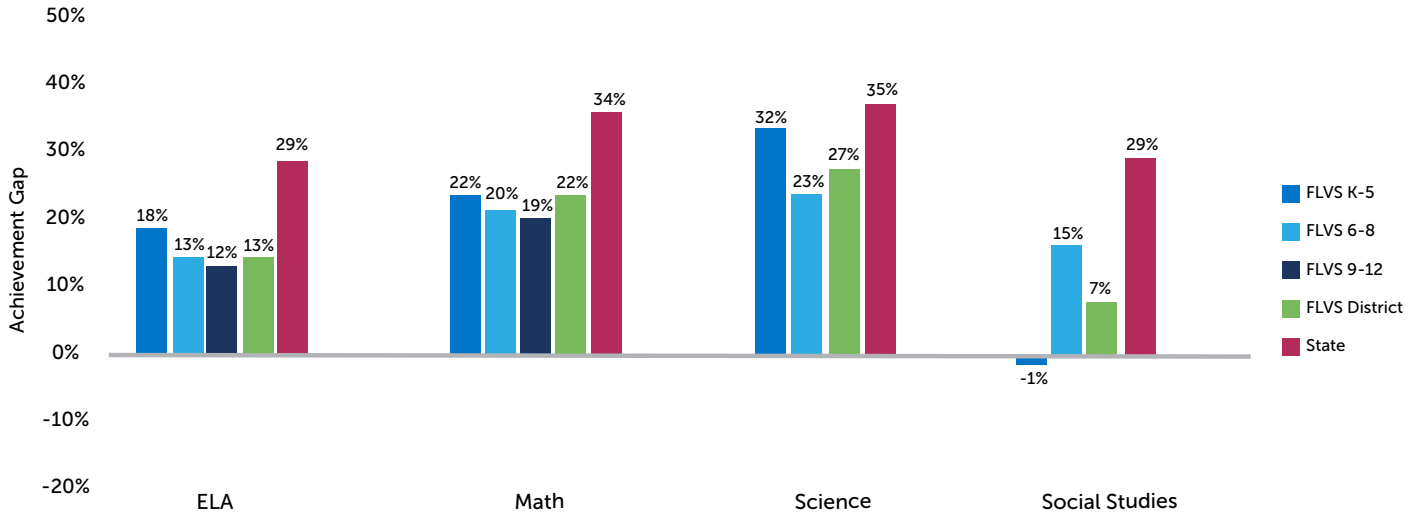
Social Studies: Grades 6-12 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

The achievement gaps across subgroups for FLVS students is less than 15% except when comparing students with and without disabilities.

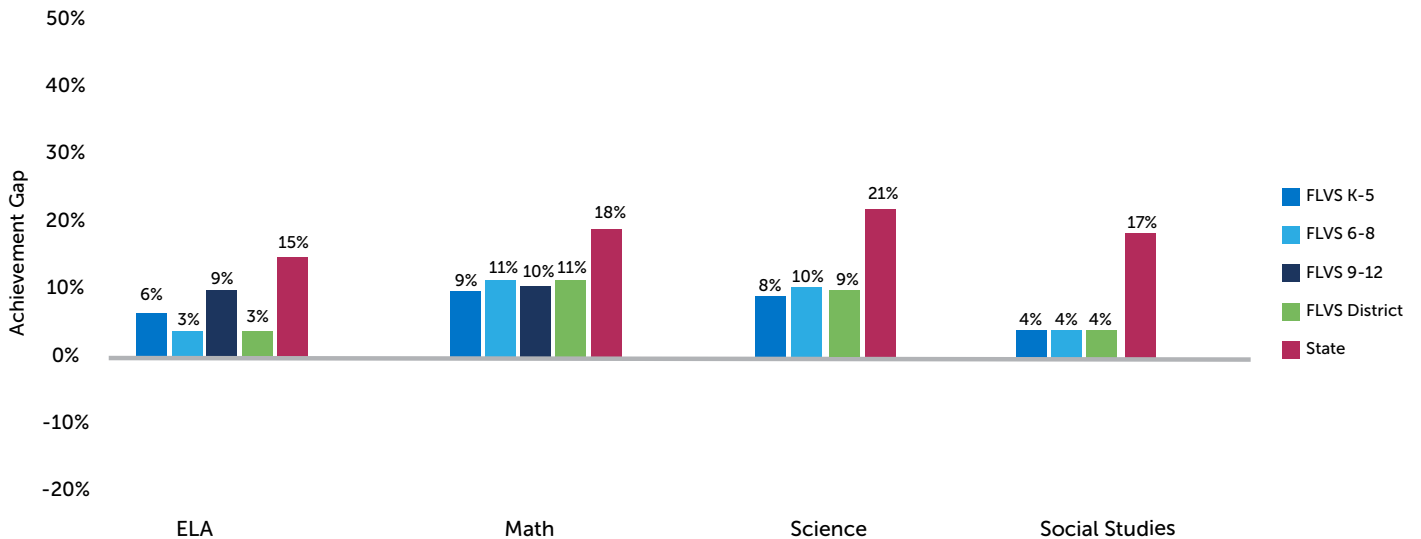
White vs. Black 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

The achievement gap for White and Black students is substantially higher statewide than among students at FLVS, with the exception of science achievement in fifth grade.

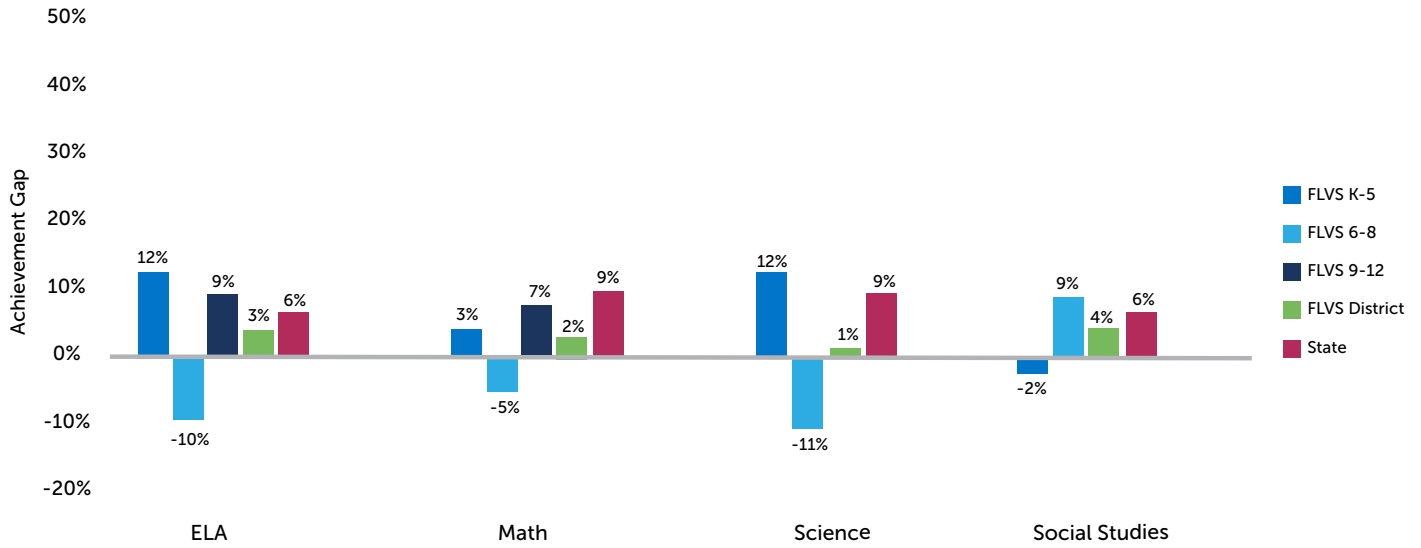
White vs. Hispanic 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

The White vs. Hispanic achievement gap is lower for all subgroups among FLVS students than statewide.

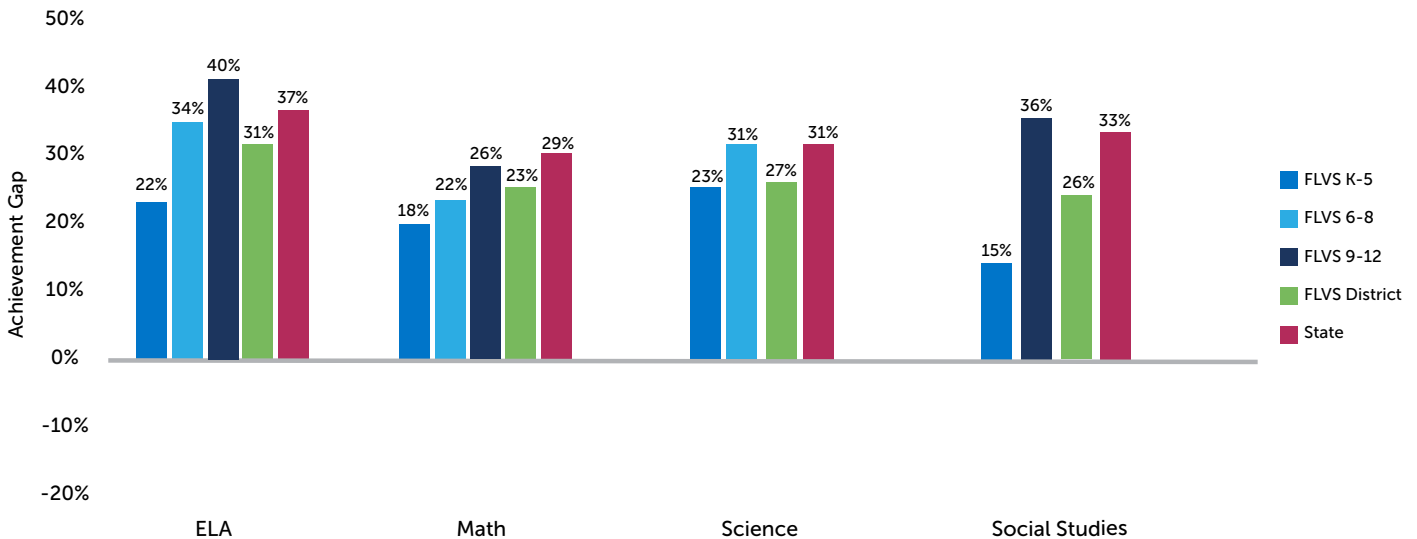
White vs. Multiracial 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

- Although the achievement gap for ELA and Science among the youngest White vs. Multiracial students is higher than the gap at the state level, those gaps reverse direction as students get older.

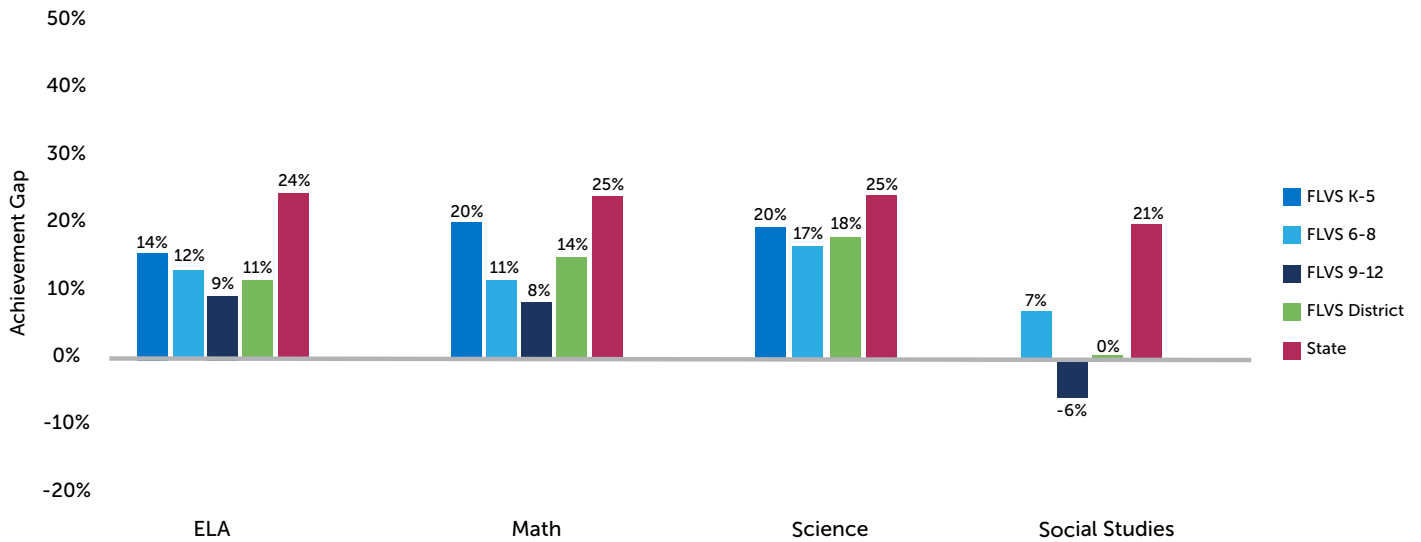
Students with Disabilities vs. Students without Disabilities 2020-21



KEY INSIGHTS:

- Students with and without disabilities have the largest achievement gaps across subjects.
- The gaps for FLVS students in Grades 9-12 exceed the statewide gap for ELA and Social Studies.

Economically Disadvantaged Students vs. Not Economically Disadvantaged Students



KEY INSIGHTS:

Across all subjects and grade levels, the FLVS achievement gap between students with low socioeconomic status compared to their peers is less than the gap at the state level.

Trends

Although the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities remains high, the size of the gap for FLVS students in this subgroup has narrowed considerably across all subject areas since the previous [2018-19 analysis](#). However, achievement gaps by subgroups of race and socioeconomic status have increased slightly. Due to a surge in enrollment during the pandemic, it is not surprising that these gaps are now closer to the statewide levels. A year-over-year analysis of math and English Language Arts from 2018 to 2021 for third to tenth grade students is available [here](#).

Placing Students at the Center

For educators to close the achievement gap, students must receive evidence-based instruction, rigorous academic content, progress monitoring, and linkages between school and home.¹

The Florida Virtual School Full Time curriculum includes a variety of instructional approaches that are supported by internal and external research. Instructors monitor the progress of each student throughout the year, and they engage students and families with practices such as discussion-based assessments. FLVS Full Time teachers also receive extensive training and ongoing support. As a result, the achievement gaps among students enrolled in FLVS Full Time are consistently lower than the state, especially for mathematics and when comparing White and Black students. The combination of our instructional model, certified teachers, professional development, and an ongoing goal to offer students the curriculum choices and instructional rigor they need for a personalized educational journey contributes to the success of FLVS students.

¹ Source: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2015-10-27-8-proven-ways-to-help-close-the-achievement-gap>