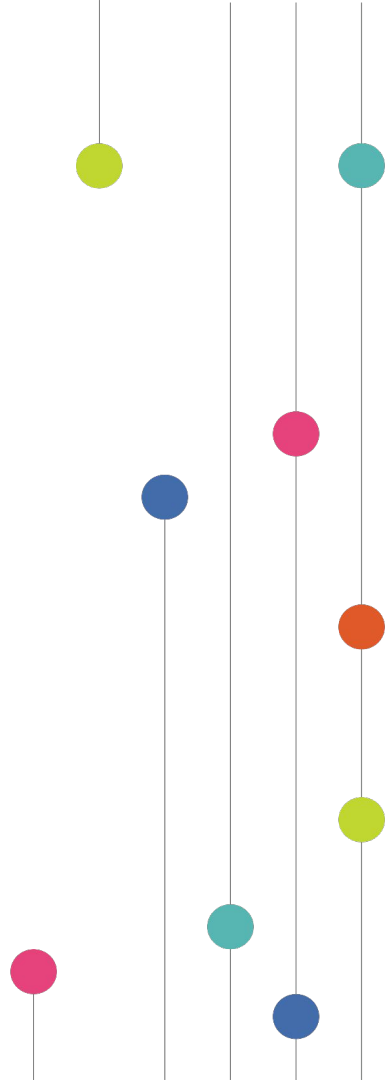


Kindergarten Readiness

*A February 2024 analysis of publicly available
Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)
and data for the 2022-2023 school year*



Every Child. Every Neighborhood.



Introduction: Pre-Kindergarten Eligibility

- Public school districts are **required to offer tuition-free, prekindergarten (Pre-K) programs if there are 15 or more eligible children** in the district who are four-years-old on or before September 1st of the school year. School districts are not required to provide Pre-K programs for three-year-olds, however, they may choose to do so.
- **A child is considered eligible for tuition-free public Pre-K** if they meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements:
 - is unable to speak and comprehend the English language
 - is economically disadvantaged
 - is homeless
 - is the child of an active duty member or injured/killed member of the armed forces of the United States
 - is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award
 - is or ever has been in foster care
- A school district may offer a **tuition-based public Pre-K program to children who are ineligible** for free public Pre-K.
- In this analysis, students eligible for tuition-free public Pre-K are referred to as “eligible,” while those ineligible for tuition-free public Pre-K are referred to as “not eligible.”

Introduction: Kindergarten Readiness

- Districts must conduct a **beginning of year (BOY) reading screener** for kindergarten students using either the *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)* or *mCLASS Texas*.
 - Districts are able to choose which approved Kindergarten Readiness assessment they use.
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) **bases Kindergarten Readiness on a literacy assessment focused on vocabulary, letter names, and spelling.**
- A student is **“Kindergarten Ready”** if they meet the passing/“on track” benchmark for all three literacy assessment subtests: vocabulary, letter names, and spelling. Benchmark criteria for kindergarten readiness are determined by the TEA.
- **Note:** The Good Reason Houston geography includes Houston-region 11 ISDs and the charters which fall within those ISD boundaries. Typically, ISDs and charters are included in our analyses, however, due to charters offering very limited Pre-K programming, charters have been excluded from our analysis.
- **Note:** Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Key Findings

- After a significant decrease in Pre-K enrollment during the pandemic, **the number of eligible three- and four-year-olds enrolling in Pre-K has been slowly increasing within the Houston-region.** Currently, the average Houston-region Pre-K enrollment rate is 39%, slightly below pre-pandemic Pre-K enrollment levels of 41%.
- The benefits of enrolling children in high-quality Pre-K programs are significant. **Students who were eligible and attended Pre-K were more than two times as likely to be kindergarten ready** across Houston than those who were eligible and did not attend Pre-K.
- Across all Houston-region ISDs, **Black, Hispanic, Emergent Bilingual (EB), and Economically Disadvantaged (EcoDis) students who attended Pre-K were more likely** to be kindergarten ready than their peers who did not attend Pre-K.
 - Specifically, there is an opportunity for Pre-K enrollment efforts to focus on eligible **Black and Hispanic students who were shown to significantly benefit from attending Pre-K** compared to their eligible peers who did not attend Pre-K.

Pre-K Enrollment

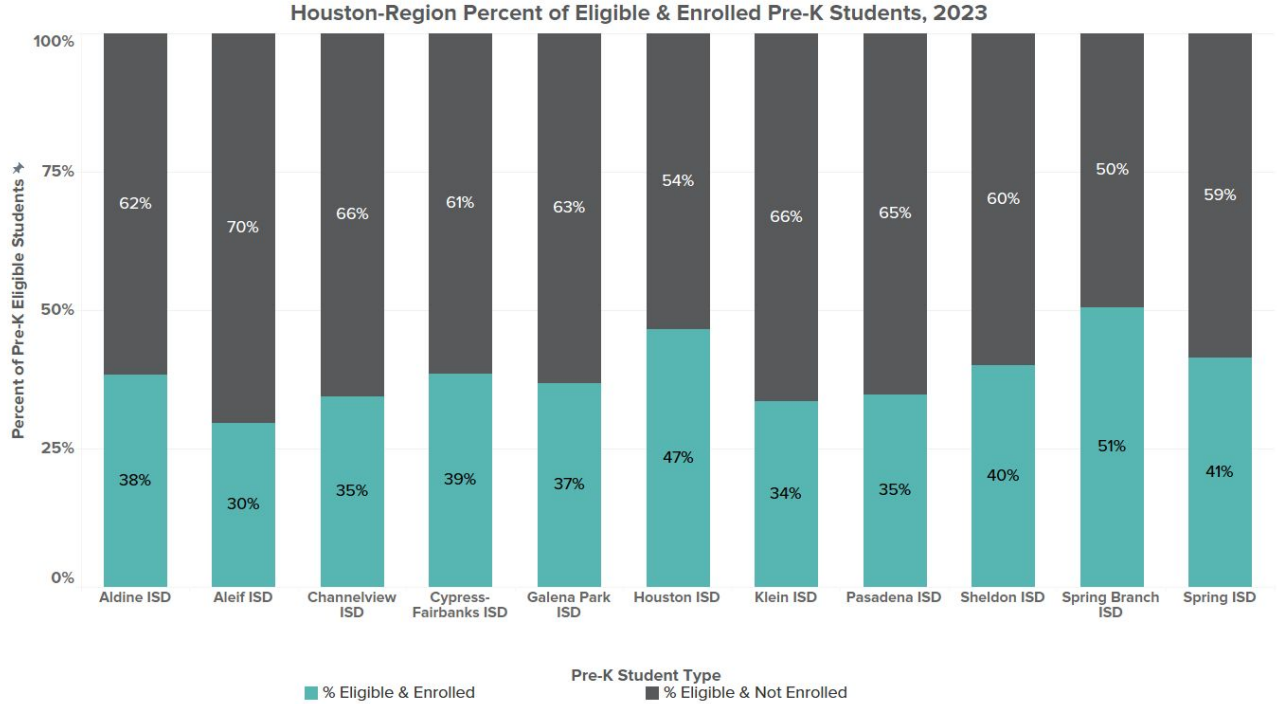


In the Houston-region, the combined eligible three- and four-year-old Pre-K enrollment increased 1% in 2023, following a 5% increase between 2021-22.

District	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Enrollment Change 2017-2023
Aldine ISD	39%	40%	43%	44%	34%	37%	38%	-1%
Alief ISD	31%	35%	33%	33%	28%	30%	30%	-1%
Channelview ISD	28%	32%	30%	35%	25%	33%	35%	+7%
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	36%	36%	34%	35%	30%	35%	39%	+3%
Galena Park ISD	31%	35%	38%	38%	35%	36%	37%	+6%
Houston ISD	49%	51%	53%	56%	44%	46%	47%	-2%
Klein ISD	35%	33%	30%	30%	28%	35%	34%	-1%
Pasadena ISD	32%	35%	33%	37%	31%	32%	35%	+3%
Sheldon ISD	46%	46%	48%	46%	34%	36%	40%	-6%
Spring Branch ISD	49%	57%	63%	60%	48%	56%	51%	+2%
Spring ISD	40%	36%	37%	35%	31%	39%	41%	+1%
Houston Region Average	38%	40%	40%	41%	33%	38%	39%	+1%

Note: Pre-K enrollment is calculated as the percent of ADA-eligible 3 and 4-year-olds who enrolled in public Pre-K in 2023. Calculated by dividing total 3 and 4-y/o Pre-K enrollment by the estimated number of Pre-K-eligible students (using 2x the ADA-eligible first grade counts to estimate).

In 2023, 39% of eligible three- and four-year-olds across the Houston region were enrolled in Pre-K, with Spring Branch and Houston ISDs enrolling the highest percentage of eligible students.

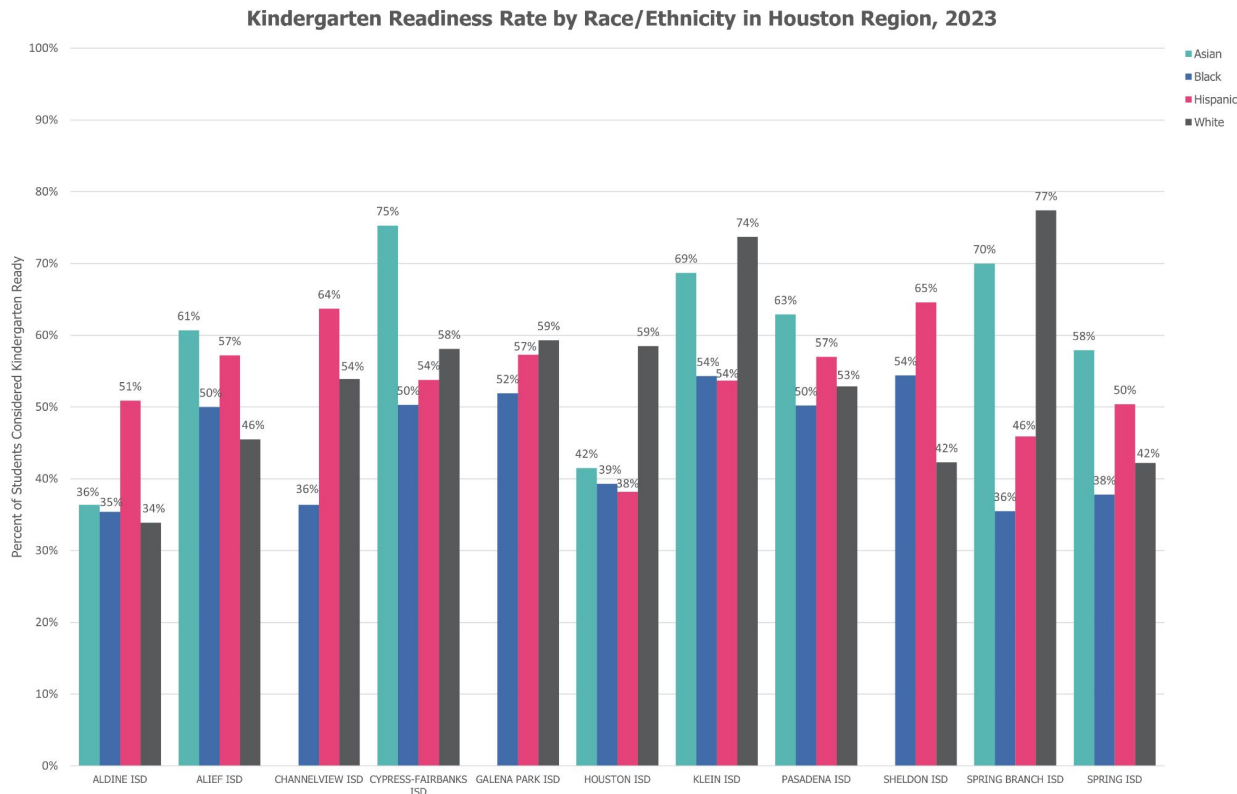


Note: Pre-K enrollment is calculated as the percent of ADA-eligible 3 and 4-year-olds who enrolled in public Pre-K in 2023. Calculated by dividing total 3 and 4-y/o Pre-K enrollment by the estimated number of Pre-K-eligible students (using 2x the ADA-eligible first grade counts to estimate).

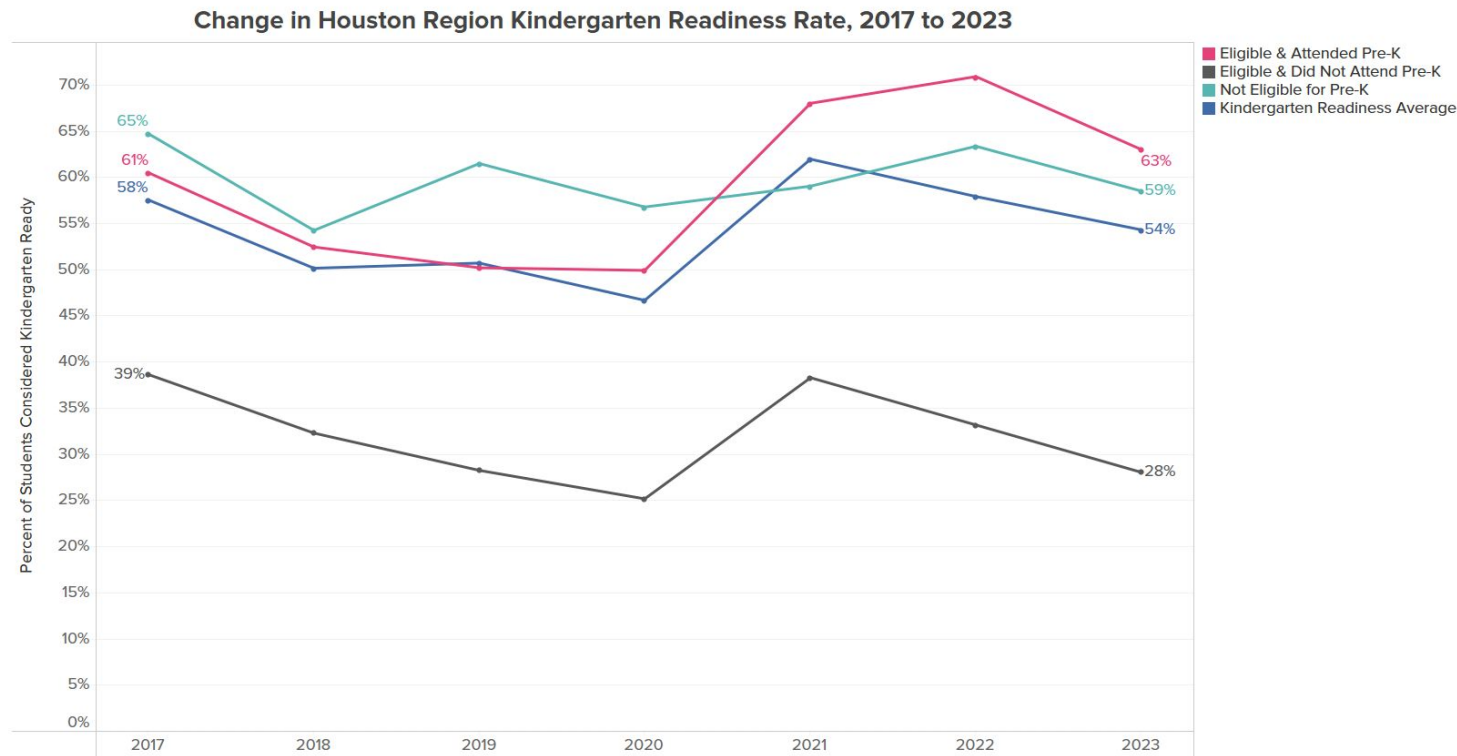
Kindergarten Readiness



When comparing all students who were assessed for kindergarten readiness across the Houston-region, Black and Hispanic students were less likely to be kindergarten ready than their Asian and white peers.

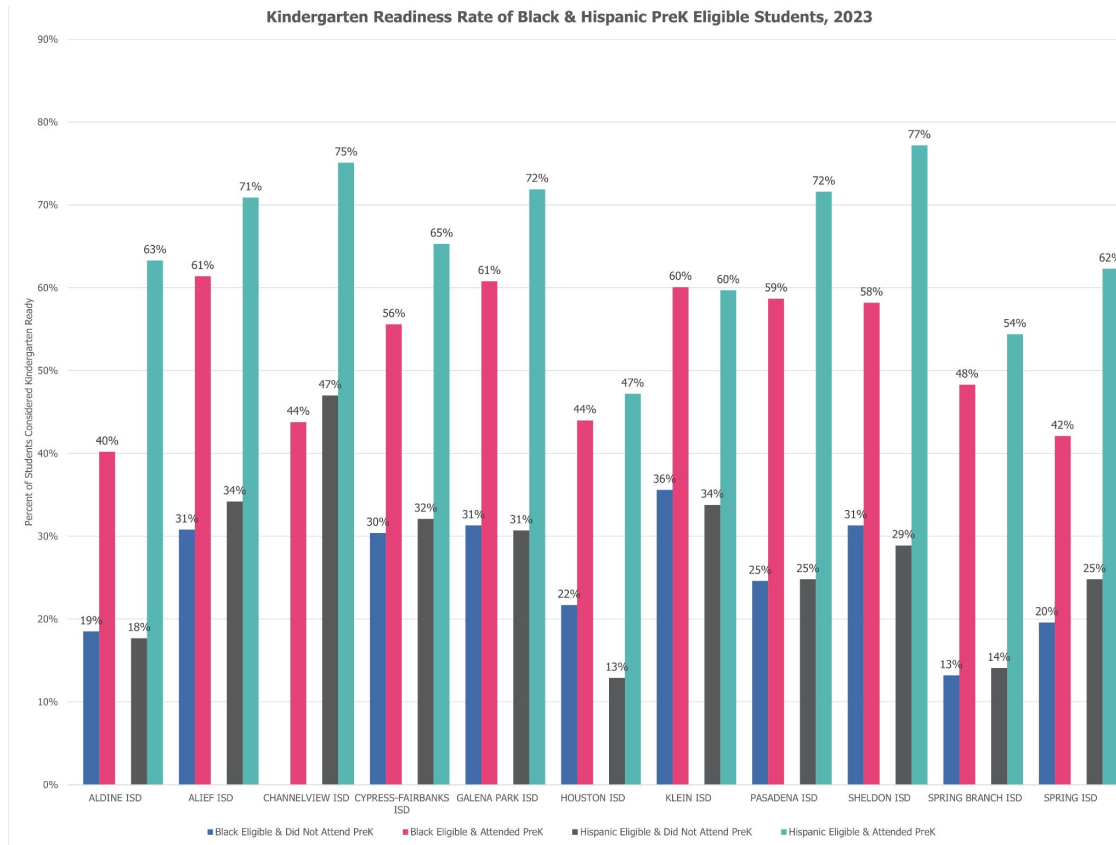


Overall, when comparing students by Pre-K eligibility, those who were eligible and attended Pre-K were more than 2x more likely to be kindergarten ready compared to students who were eligible for Pre-K and did not attend.

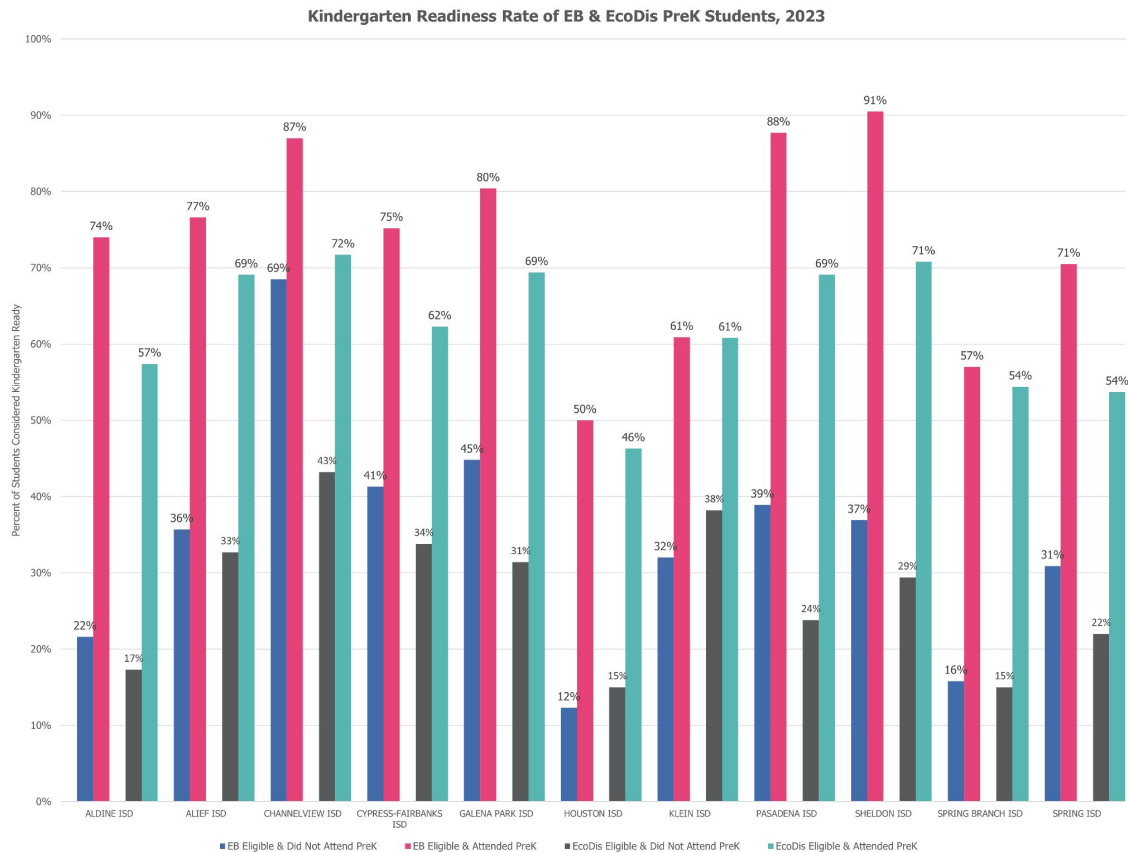


Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

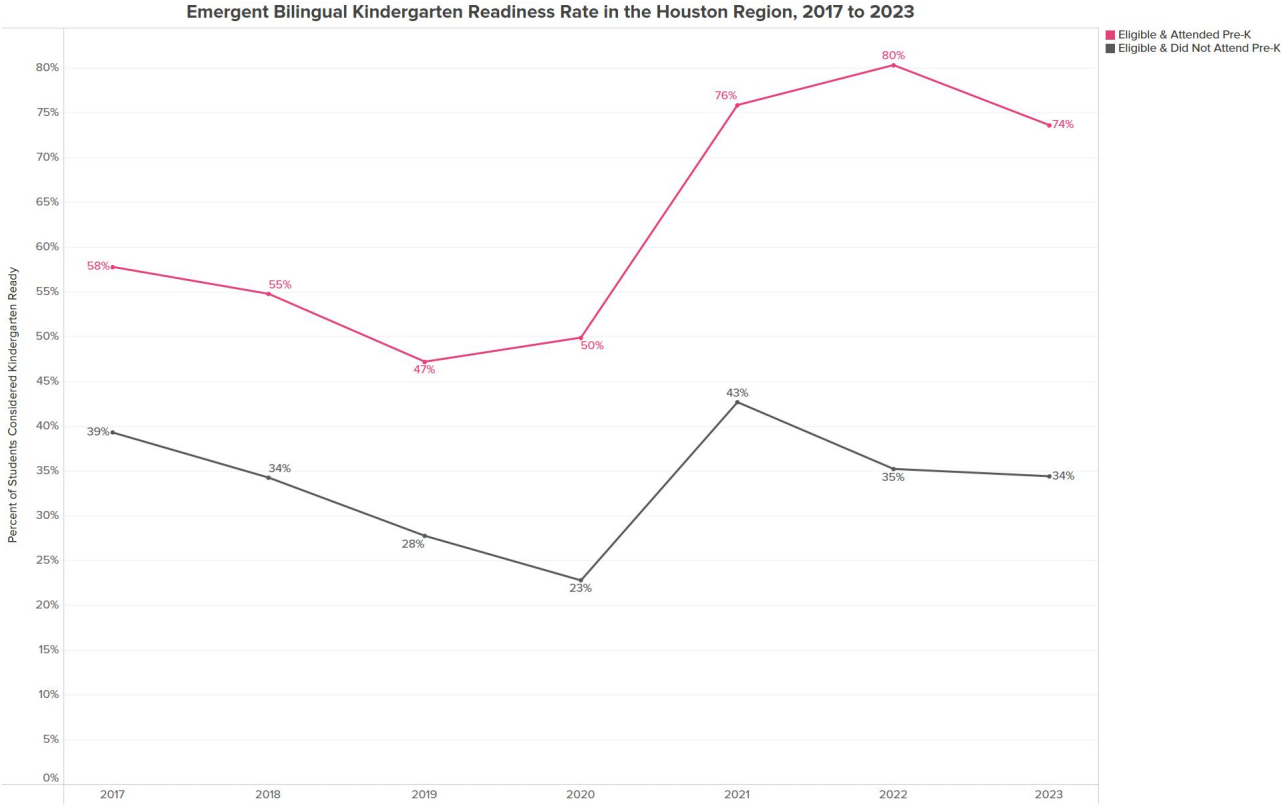
In particular, eligible Black & Hispanic students who attended Pre-K were 2x more likely to be kindergarten ready compared to eligible Black & Hispanic students did not attend Pre-K.



This trend held true for Emergent Bilingual (EB) and Economically Disadvantaged (EcoDis) students who attended Pre-K as well, across all Houston-region ISDs.

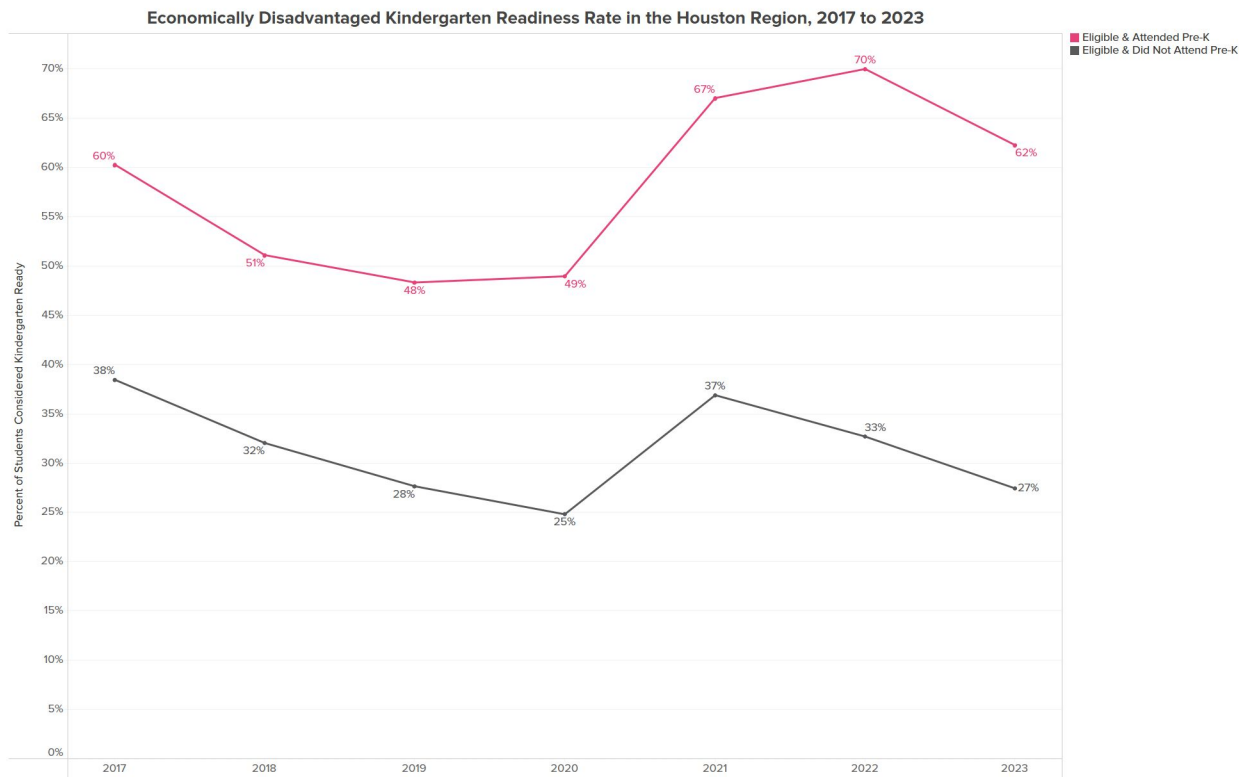


Specifically, amongst the Houston-region, 3-in-4 Emergent Bilingual (EB) students who attended Pre-K were kindergarten ready, compared to 3-in-10 EB students who did not attend.



Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Similarly, Economically Disadvantaged (EcoDis) students who attended Pre-K were kindergarten ready at about 2.5 times the rate of their EcoDis peers who did not attend Pre-K.

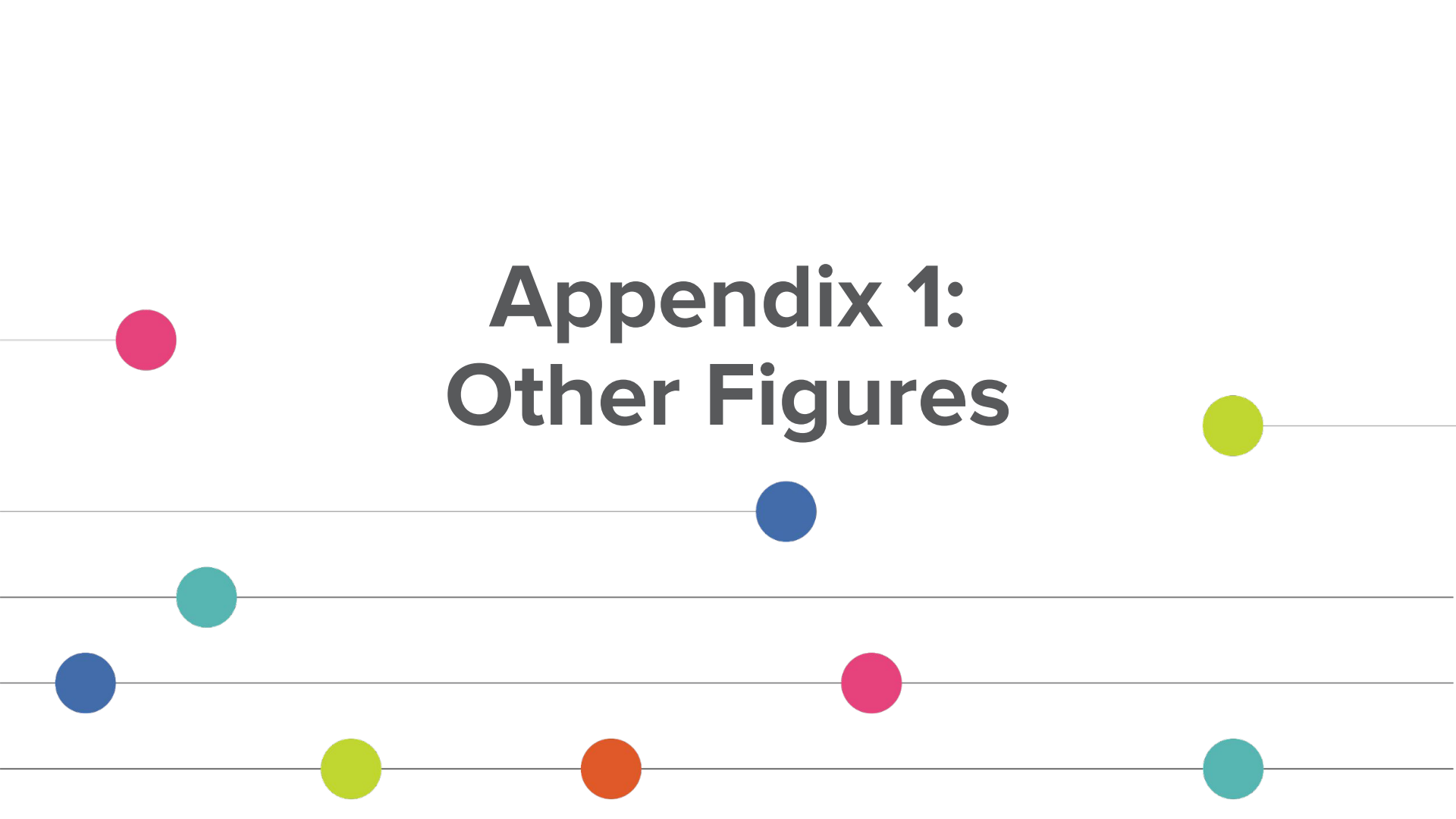


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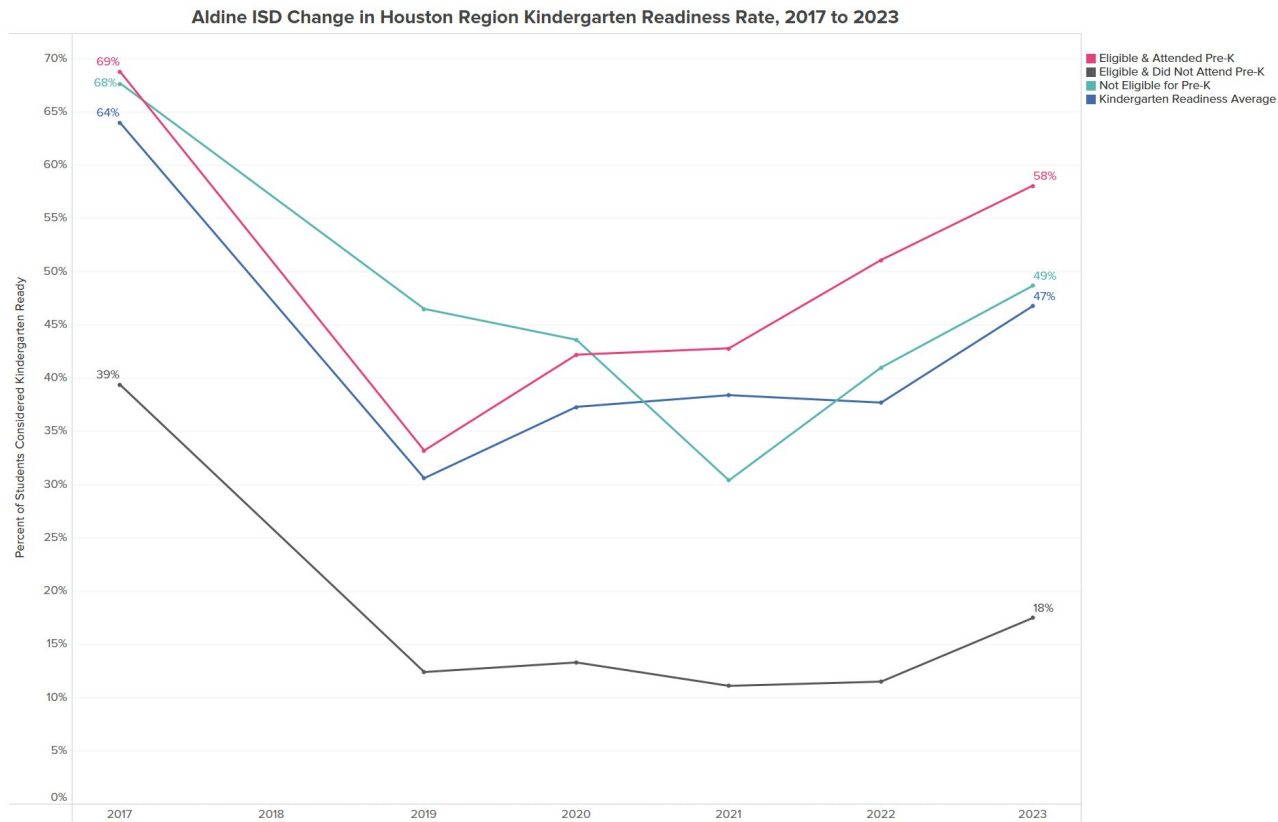
Implications and Takeaways

- **The impact of attending Pre-K is profound.** High-quality early childhood programs dramatically improve Kindergarten readiness rates, especially for Pre-K eligible students, including Emergent Bilingual and Economically Disadvantaged students.
- In the future, districts **can strive to allocate resources** towards developing high-quality Pre-K programs, early education talent development, and leveraging partnerships with child care providers to ultimately **increase the number of eligible students who enroll in Pre-K**.
- Future legislative efforts should continue focusing on early education, including, expanding the Early Education Allotment to include Pre-K, incentivizing partnerships with child care providers, and evaluating ways to improve the quality of Pre-K. **This would provide additional funding support for full-day Pre-K programs** and ideally, increase the number of eligible students who enroll in Pre-K and support them to be Kindergarten Ready.

Appendix 1: Other Figures

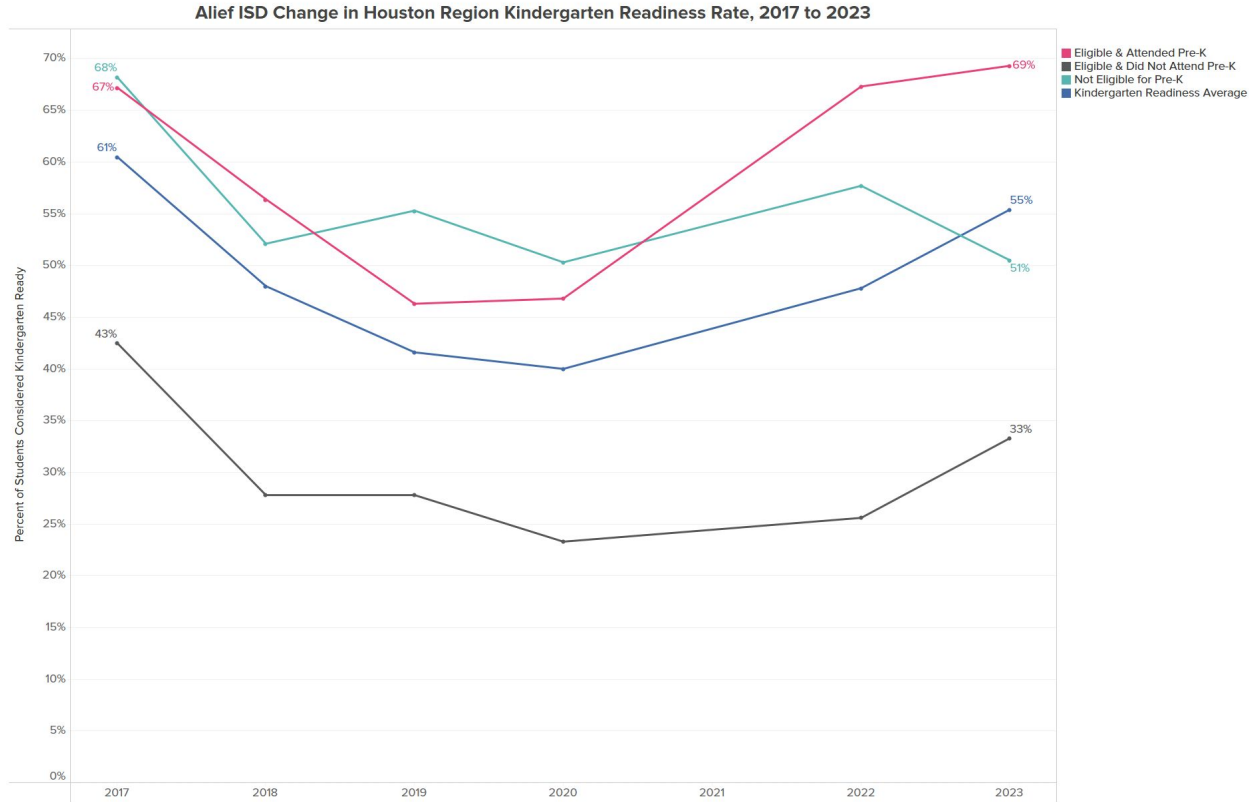
A decorative graphic consisting of several horizontal lines and scattered colored dots. The dots are in shades of pink, blue, teal, lime green, and orange. The lines are thin and light gray, creating a grid-like background for the text.

Aldine ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Alief ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



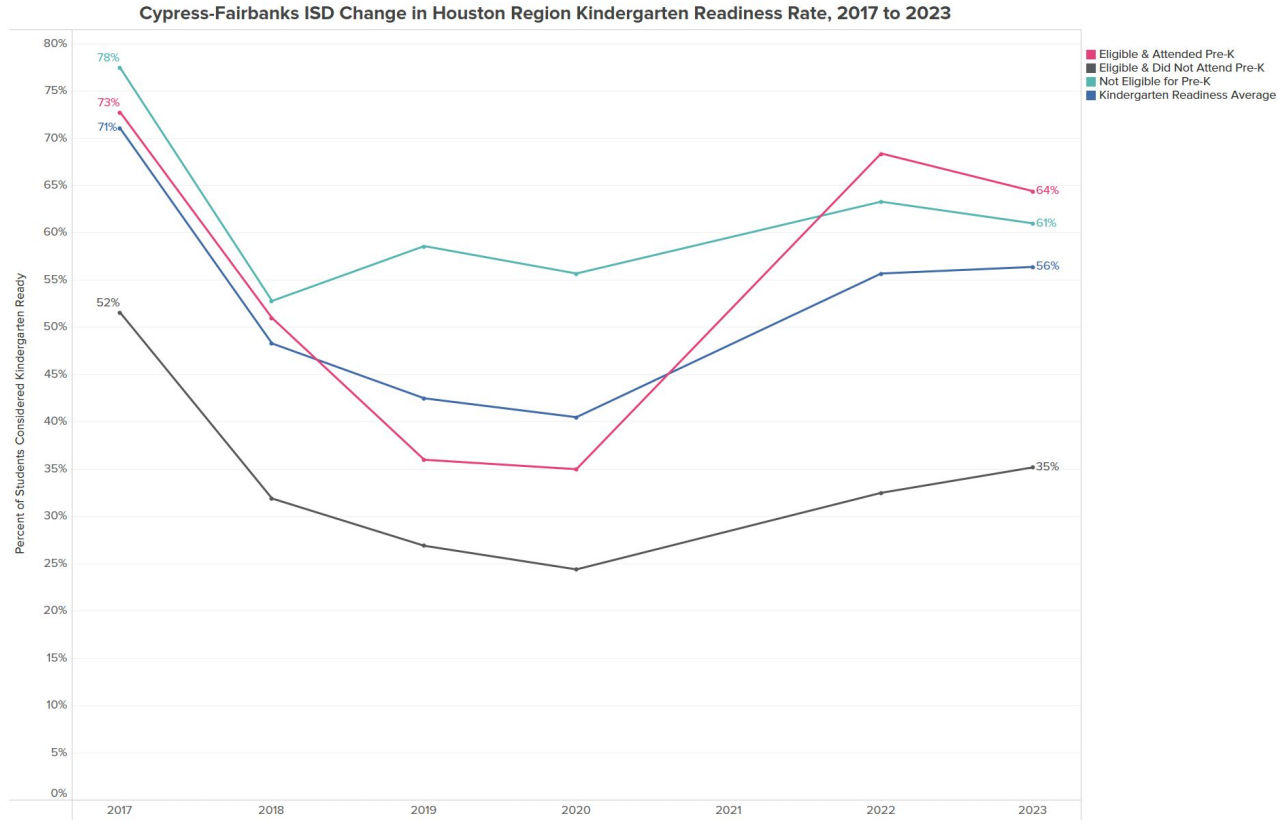
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Channelview ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



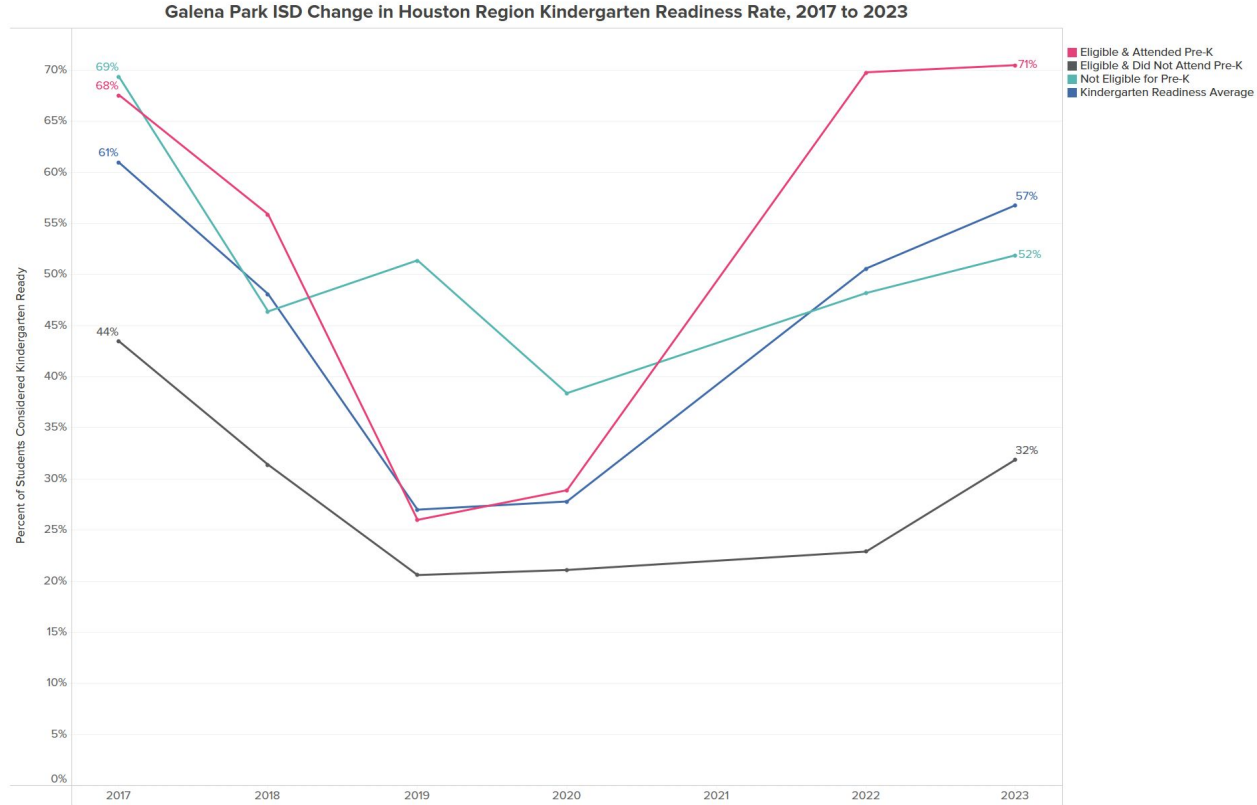
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



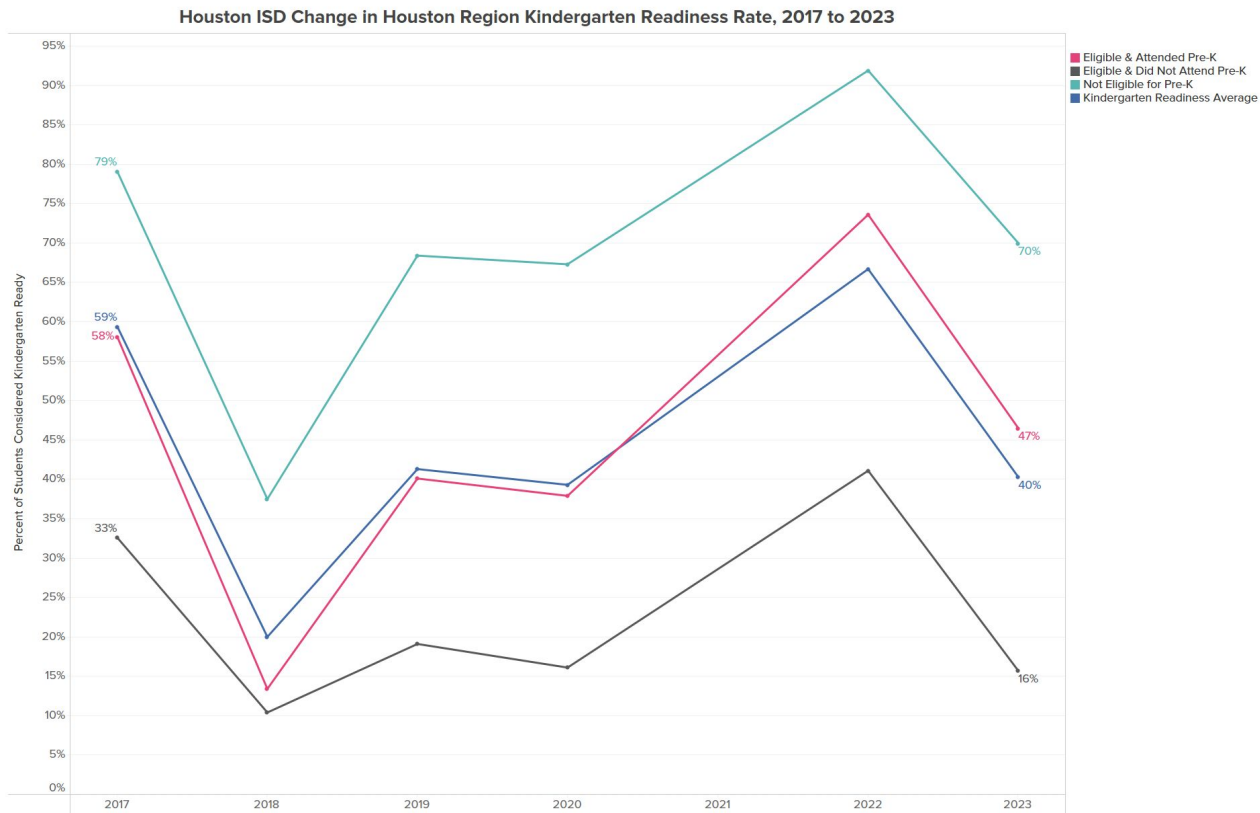
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Galena Park ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



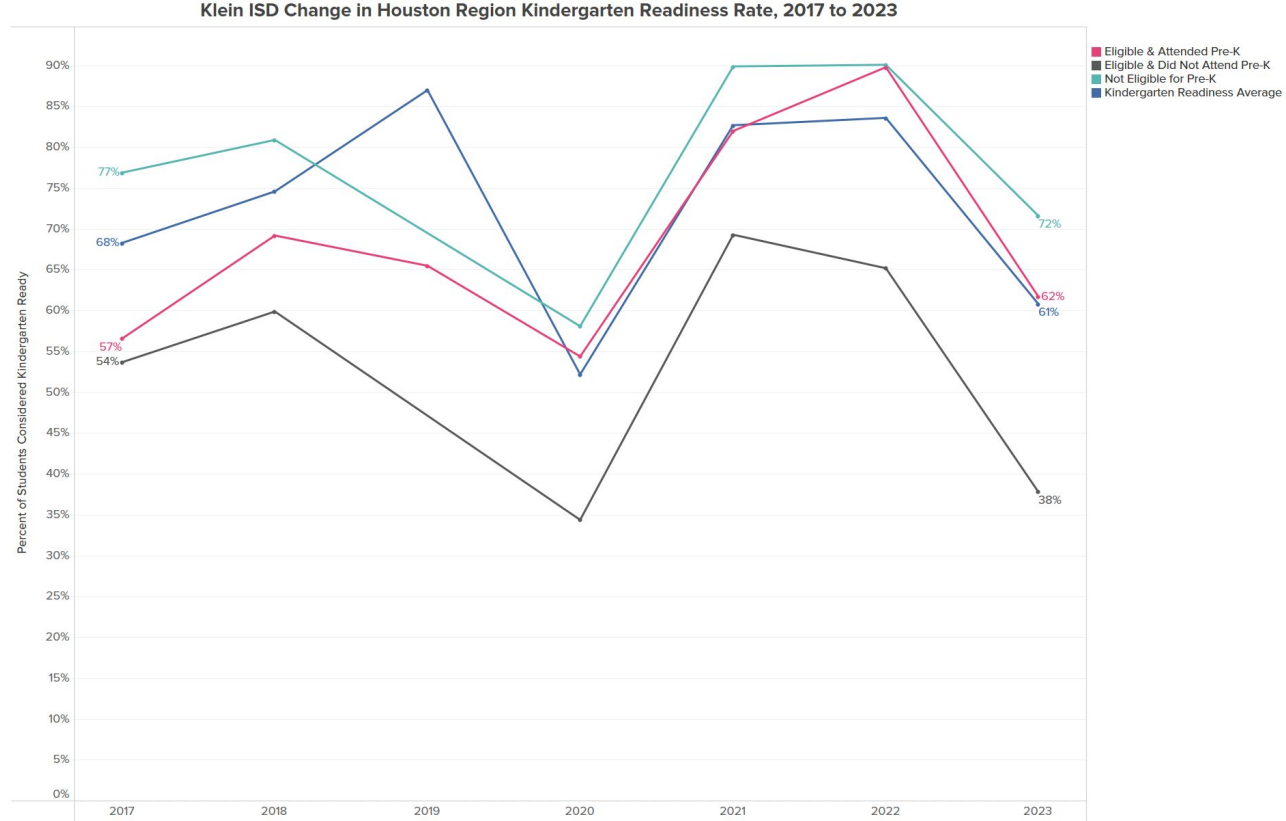
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Houston ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



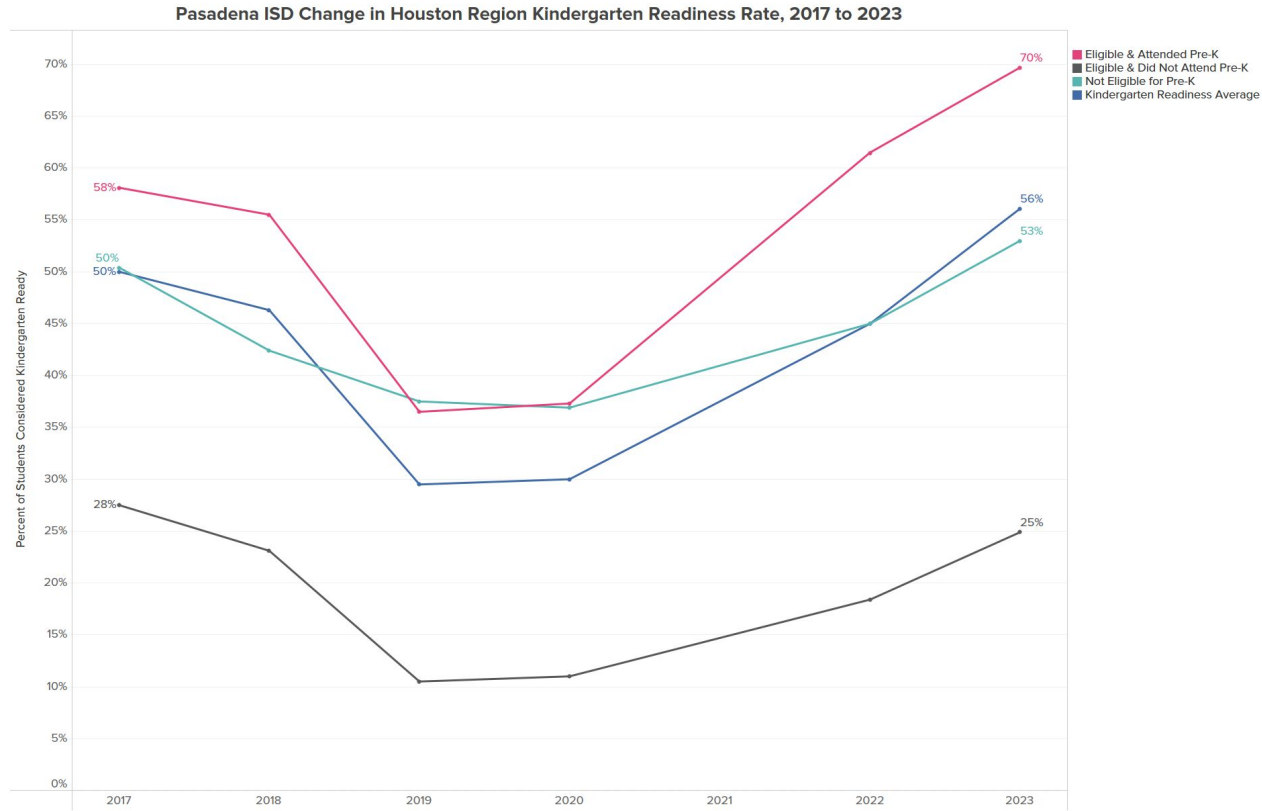
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Klein ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



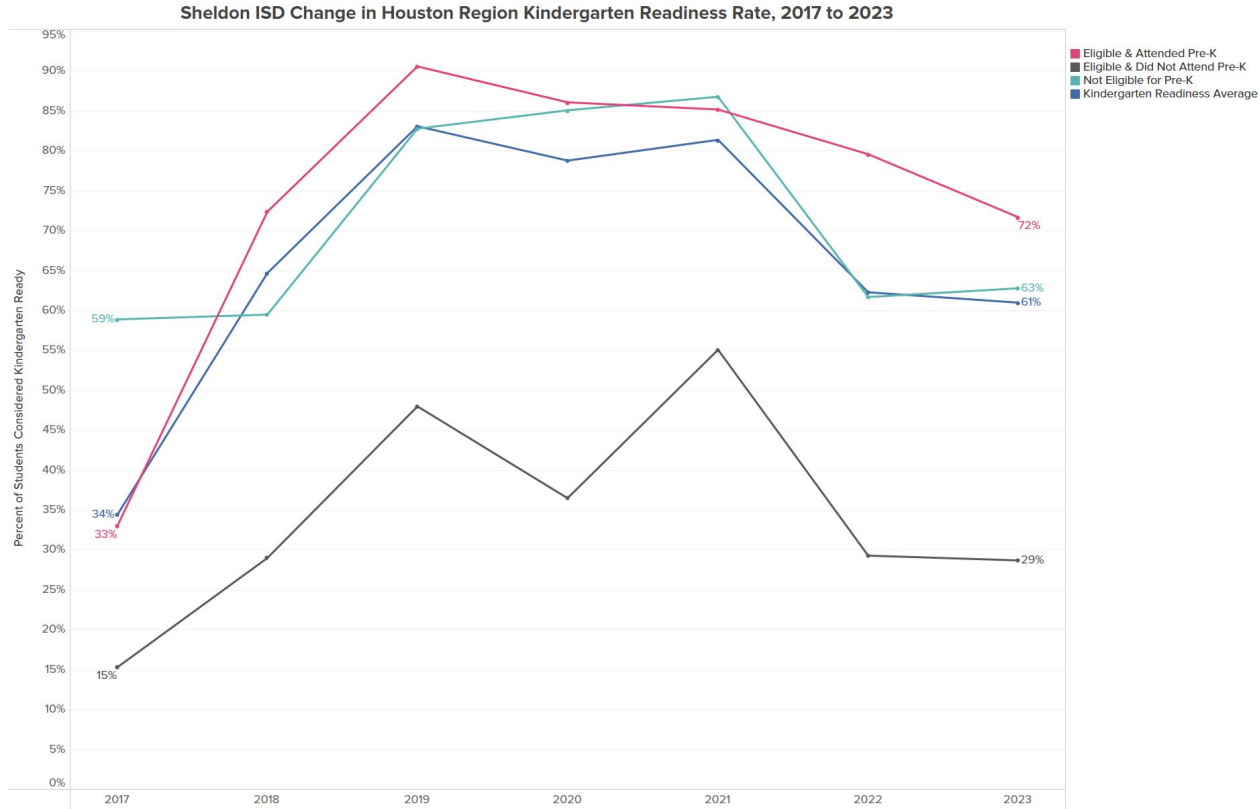
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Pasadena ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



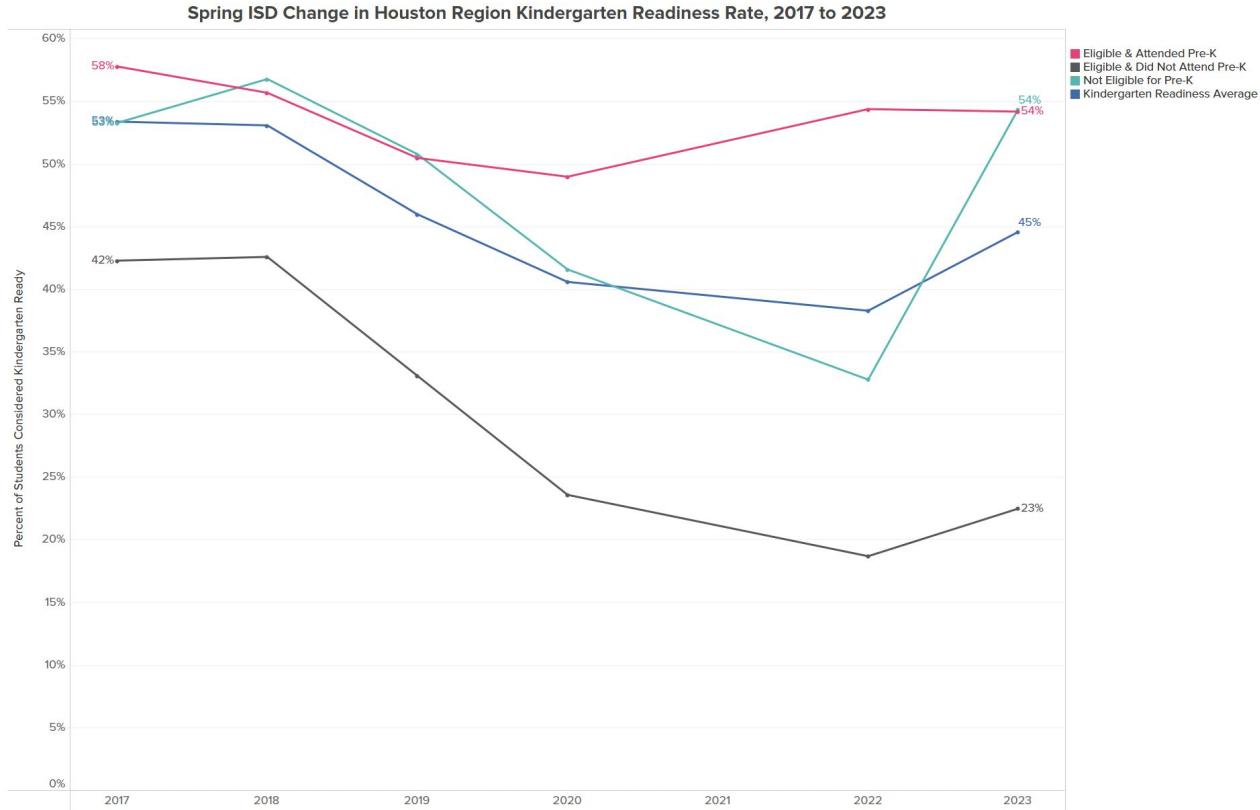
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Sheldon ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



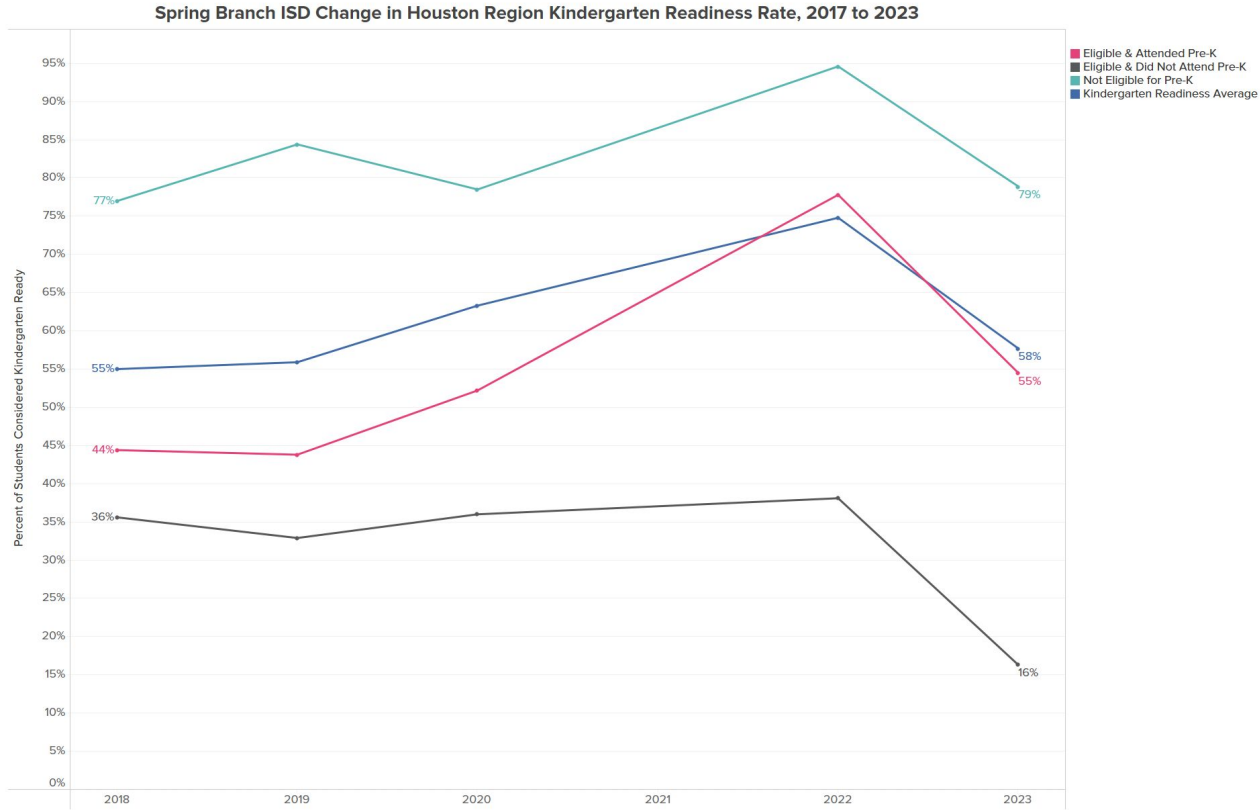
Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Spring ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.

Spring Branch ISD Kindergarten Readiness Rates



Note: Due to changes in the TX-KEA Kindergarten Readiness scoring methodology for the 2022-23 school year, kindergarten readiness scores may not be directly comparable to prior years.