Opportunities to Support Student Attendance

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September 6, 2016

Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow

http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/

#schooleveryday

Using Data to Drive Action

National, State, Local Data Resources
Nationwide

- **NEW Nationwide**, more than 6.5 million students—or 13% of all students—are chronically absent (absent 15 or more school days during the school year).

- **Geography** — Chronic absenteeism is prevalent in all parts of the country. The graphs represent the areas of greatest concentration of the percentages of students missing three or more weeks of school.

- **Race & Ethnicity** — More than 22 percent of American Indian students were chronically absent in 2013-14, followed by Pacific Islanders, blacks, students of two or more races, Hispanics-Latinos, whites, and Asians.

- **School Level** — High school students were absent the most—almost 20 percent—followed by middle school (12 percent) and elementary school students (10 percent).

- **Disability Status** — More than 17 percent of students with disabilities were chronically absent compared to 12 percent of students without disabilities.

- **Gender** — Roughly 13 percent of both males and females were chronically absent.

- **NEW Chronic student absenteeism where the majority of teachers are also frequently absent:**
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students represent 0.4% of all students, but 2% of chronically absent students who attend schools where more than 50% of teachers were absent for more than 10 days.
  - Black students represent 15% of all students, but 21% of chronically absent students who attend schools where more than 50% of teachers were absent for more than 10 days.


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State Statistics

Based on data from Governor’s Office of Student Achievement
Can be customized for your school district and school and broken up by subgroups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable Outcomes</th>
<th>FY 15</th>
<th>FY 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track excused/unexcused student absences</td>
<td>7.8 days per student</td>
<td>7.8 days per student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease the number of unexcused student absences</td>
<td>4.1 days per student</td>
<td>4.1 days per student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on data from GaDOE’s Strategic Plan

State Board Rule on Student Attendance

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Additional Slide on how to access data from Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- [https://gosa.georgia.gov/](https://gosa.georgia.gov/)

CCRPI Indicator

- Achievement Category
- Post School Readiness Category
- Percent of students missing fewer than 6 days of school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School Indicators</th>
<th>Benchmark for Indicator (%)</th>
<th>Performance on Indicator (%)</th>
<th>Adjusted Performance on Indicator (%)</th>
<th>Points Possible for Indicator</th>
<th>Points Earned on Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Percent of English Learners with positive movement from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELs</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>85.714</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Percent of Students With Disabilities served in general education environment greater than 60% of the school day</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>52.217</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Percent of students in grade 8 achieving a Level 3 or higher on the Georgia Milestones ELA EOC</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83.003</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Percent of students completing 2 or more state defined career related assessments or inventories and a state defined individual graduation plan by the end of grade 10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.412</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Percent of students missing fewer than 6 days of school</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>60.239</td>
<td>85.288</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To access, go to ccrpi.gadoe.org
Attendance & School Climate

To access, go to ccrpi.gadoe.org

Attendance Tools within the Georgia Statewide Longitudinal Data System

Click the “MORE” button to view Attendance data by school type and/or individual school.
Now Use the Data

• Complete Self Assessment: [Does Attendance Really Count in Our School](#)
• How often do you get attendance reports?
• Upon receiving that information, what’s your next step?
• How effective are your programs?
• Did you know.... CCRPI Exceeding the Bar
• Has your school set a goal to increase Average Daily Attendance? What are you doing to help your school reach the goal?
Recognizing Good & Improved Attendance

What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. AttendanceWorks recommends defining it as missing 10% or more of school for any reason.

Talk to the child to find out what is preventing the child from being in school #meaningfulconversation
• **Senate Bill 100, Georgia, 2015**

• **Certificate of School Enrollment** (Effective 7/2015)
  
  • Eliminated the requirement for schools to submit noncompliance data for students with excessive unexcused absences and certain discipline infractions.

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### How are the students being engaged?

**Disengagement**

- Lack of engaging and relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Poor school climate

**Engagement**

- What makes a student want to come to your school?
- Mentoring Program, Advisement Program, **Extra Curricular Activities**, Classes that promote a sense of belongingness
- Personalized Learning Environment, PBIS, School Climate Survey

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Principles for Recognizing Attendance

- Schools & community partners can reinforce a culture of attendance by:
  - Recognizing good and improved attendance, not just perfect attendance.
  - Measuring attendance at regular intervals, not just at year's end.
  - Rewarding timeliness, not just showing up.

Best Practices for Using Incentives

- Incentives should be part of a comprehensive approach to foster a culture of attendance.
- Incentives should accompany a deeper commitment to student and family engagement.
- Friendly competition among classes or schools can motivate students to attend regularly.
- Low-cost or no-cost rewards can be just as effective as fancy prizes.
- Information for parents and rewards acknowledging them for their child’s improvement can engage families.
- Get Business/Industry Involved...not with $$$
  - Establishing School Wide Attendance Incentives
  - Attendance Incentives
**All Level Specific Incentives**

- Displays showing attendance rates by classroom or grade can inspire students to show up everyday and let them know the school values attendance.
- AttenDANCE as an incentive for attending at least 95 percent of the 45 days at the end of a particular quarter.
- Mentors who interact with them in school on an on-going and consistent basis to talk about coming to school on time every day and help them solve some of the problems that get in the way of their showing up.
- Initiate a “cross-age helper” or “buddy” system in which older students with good attendance are permitted to assist younger students on a weekly basis.
- Breakfast for students with 100% attendance each month.
- Random Raffle Days: AM or end of day...students receive ticket at beginning of day.

**Use Attendance Displays**

Displays showing attendance rates by classroom or grade can inspire students to show up everyday and let them know the school values attendance.

**Engage Students in Tracking Their Own Attendance**

- As early as preschool, students can keep track of their own absences using stickers and gold stars. Some teachers find attendance tracking has the added advantage of teaching math skills.
  - Is there a math lesson involved in there somewhere?
Find the Right Reward

- Ask students what would motivate them.
- Come up with small, low-cost rewards.
- Offer special privileges.
- Use assemblies or newsletters to recognize students.
- Plan a special meal or pizza party for the winning classroom or students.
- Celebrity Wake Up! Call Program
- Free or Inexpensive Rewards for Students & Staff Wisconsinpbisnetwork.org
- PBISmaryland.org

Rewards are great, but it is also important to address the root cause of truancy and find out why students aren’t showing up.

It’s a WHOLE SCHOOL EFFORT

- Identify students with attendance concerns
- Create program for them (i.e. A-Team)
- Meet with the students during lunch as a group
- Duration of program: Entire year or when attendance concerns are resolved (assess individually)
- Inform parents of group participation
- Make time to meet with the students during grade-level lunch as a group
- Students with perfect attendance during the week (no absences, tardies, or early dismissals) receive a treat along with lots of praise. At the end of each month, students with perfect attendance earn a pizza lunch."
- Meetings Topics: Talk about the importance of school, the participants with perfect attendance share how their week went and the benefits of being in school each day. The kids receive support, caring, and encouragement from the group facilitator
- Daily contact with the group members who have the greatest attendance concerns. This can include a morning check-in, visit to the classroom, or a call to the home if the child is absent.
- Create friendly competition among classrooms of grades. Classes can compete for most improved or highest attendance in a certain time frame (i.e. a month or a quarter)
- Challenge classes to take a “classroom selfie,” and reward the class that has the most students present.
- Shut out on the morning announcements to all homerooms who achieved a certain percentage attendance for that previous week.
- Monthly the classroom with the overall highest attendance for that month will receive a whole group reward. Set a schedule in advance.

What matters most is a making a positive connection with the child.
Integrating Attendance in Parent Engagement

Parent Campaign

- **Bringing Attendance Home: A Toolkit to Engage Parents**
- “It’s 9 a.m. Do You Know Where Your Children Are?”
- Web-based parental access to their students’ attendance data and an “ask for help getting my child to school” feature
- Have a system in place to notify parents when their child is truant.
- Help navigate the adolescent years, such as a parent guide that includes information on parenting classes as well as resources to help the parent in job skill training, social services, and tips on helping students with homework
- Go to the parents, find out what their needs are, and work to meet them (for example, by offering parenting, ESL, or GED classes). That may mean going out into the community rather than asking parents to come to school.
• Make students and parents/guardians feel welcome. Make a point to say “hello” to every parent/guardian or student you see in the halls and outside—make it your business to know his or her names.

• Create an environment that enables students to feel successful in something—no matter how small it may seem. Award academic and attendance “letters,” as you do for athletics.

• When a student is absent, immediately talk to the parent/guardian—not their answering machine. Make a personal phone call in the evening, or call parents/guardians at work during the day.

• When a student is absent, immediately talk with the student about why he or she was not at school—let students know you are aware...and that you care that they are at school.

• Forge a relationship with local businesses where youth may congregate when truant—encourage them to help keep students in school during school hours. Create a poster that states “We support youth in school and will not serve anyone under 18 during school hours.”

• Forge a relationship with local law enforcement—make them your allies in showing the community, families, and students that school is the place to be. Empower community law enforcement to return youth to school. #We’reAllInThisTogether

• Empower and expect classroom teachers to take action when they think a student may be truant. Ask teachers to make calls to absent youth or families during planning time, in the afternoon or evenings. #RelationshipBuilding

• Reward and recognize good attendance—not just perfect attendance. Post large signs giving the daily attendance for the day. Reward individuals, classes, and the school for increased attendance. #DATA

• Make your school a place where students feel safe and respected. Adopt a character education program that is planned and implemented by students. #PBIS
Key Principals for Engaging Parents

• Engage families early. Begin partnering with families to improve student attendance while children are young and parents are typically more involved.
• Establish a positive relationship with parents, before discussing a student’s poor attendance. Often, schools contact families only when there is a problem.
• Communicate clear expectations and support. Orient parents to school policies and expectations for student attendance and on-time arrival.
• Take a strengths-based approach. Don’t assume if a child is chronically absent that it is a signal that parents do not care about the child’s education or attendance.
• Create a welcoming environment.

Get the Word Out…

Before School Year Begins
• Back-to-school letters, social media, phone calls or visits from teachers should convey:
  • The connection between attendance and achievement.
  • The date and time that school starts.
  • Reminders about required immunizations.
  • The school system’s policies on excused and unexcused absences.
  • Encourage partners—summer learning, afterschool programs or health providers—to share the message.

After School Year Begins
• Once the school year begins, emphasize attendance at:
  • Back-to-School student assemblies.
  • Back-to-School nights for parents.
  • Parent-teacher conferences.
  • Monthly or classroom newsletters.
• Keep messages positive while mentioning that families will be contacted if absences start adding up.
Positive Connections

Assign Attendance Buddies

Positive Linkages and Engagement for Students and Families

Partner with families/students to develop Student Attendance Success Plan

Recruit for engaging Before-or After-School Activities

Off plan or contacts for Health Support

Tips for Engagement

• Integrate attendance into events for the entire school community.

• Remember that parents are not easily motivated to show up to meetings solely focused on student attendance.

• Inspire attendance at meetings by publicly honoring families with good and improved attendance.
Parent-Teacher Conferences

Ideal time to:
1. Connect with families in person
2. Share how absences are affecting learning
3. Learn more about assets as well as challenges for supporting good attendance

95% ADA +
Satisfactory Attendance

94% - 91% ADA
At-Risk

90% ADA or Less
Chronic Absence

Consider a longer conference or additional family meeting on attendance

Congratulate parents on making attendance a priority and encourage them to keep it up. Ask them what they’re doing that’s enabling them to be so successful.

Let parents know that you are concerned about attendance because their child is beginning to head off track, and it is easy for absences to add up.

If student is right around 10% or a little above
Let parents know their child may be academically at risk because they have missed so much school. Discuss underlying causes and how you can help.

If student is severely chronically absent (e.g. >20%)
The type of challenges these families face may differ from those with more moderate absence problems. Be prepared to touch on difficult topics, be supportive, and be ready to connect to community resources.

95% ADA +
94% - 91% ADA
90% ADA or Less

Satisfactory Attendance
At-Risk
Chronic Absence

Framing the Conversation to Build a Relationship of Trust

1. Learn
Learn about the student’s family and their experience in your school or classroom. Ask what their vision is for their child’s future.

2. Share
Share positive things you’ve observed about the student or that you’ve heard from other teachers and peers.

3. Inform
Review attendance report with the family. Tailor your conversation to student’s level of absenteeism and connect attendance back to the family’s hopes and dreams for their child.

4. Discuss
Discuss the challenges the student faces in getting to school, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, try to understand the barriers that are keeping them from school.

5. Arrive at a Plan
Think through strategies with the family for addressing absences and help them develop a written attendance improvement plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you can help.
The Teaching Attendance Toolkit: Resources for Teachers

Ensure teachers use their relationships with students and parents to talk about attendance:

- Preparing for parent-teacher conferences: A step-by-step guide
- Student Attendance Success Plan

Engaging Community Partners
• Who Are Our Partners?

- Mayor and Elected Officials
- Businesses and Chambers of Commerce
- Superintendents and School Boards
- Local Philanthropy
- School Principals and Teachers
- Community Organizations and Faith-Based Groups
- Out-of-School Time Programs
- Health Care Providers
- Early Childhood Educators
- Housing Authorities

Making the Case (click title to get the case statements)

- Give each partner specific information on why attendance matters to them.
- Include an introductory letter
- Be specific about your desires for their involvement
- Consider hosting a countywide or cluster wide summit for your community partners and outline how they can assist with your attendance efforts.
• Review your school's CCRPI attendance data
• Meet with your principal about applying for the CCRPI Exceeding the Bar Indicator for creating a personalized climate
• Use SLDS to analyze attendance data for your school or individual students. Look at your subgroups.
• Meet with your administrators to discuss the attendance data and your ideas for an attendance improvement plan.
• Meet with students you are concerned about based on attendance data.
• Come up with monthly incentives.
• Parent conferences may be coming up soon. Share some tips with your teachers about what they can discuss in the meetings related to attendance for ALL students.
• Reach out to your community partners. Talk with the powers that be about hosting an attendance summit with your community partners for your district or your cluster.

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Resources

• Establishing School-wide Attendance Incentives
• Attendance Challenge Toolkit: Leveraging Sports Stars handout
• Positive Outliers Toolkit (which includes sample questions for site visits)
• Principal Attendance Leader award
• COMMUNITY-BASED INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS
• Increasing School Attendance for K-8 Students A review of research examining the effectiveness of truancy prevention programs ( Might be good to use as a guide for CCRPI Exceeding the Bar)
• 21 Ways to Engage Students in School
• STEPPING UP THE PACE: IMPROVING ATTENDANCE... A “How To” Mini-Guide
September Webinars

- Child Abuse Prevention & Mandated Reporting Training
  September 20, 2016, 2:00 PM - Register

- Evidence-based Gatekeeper Curriculum for Schools: Practical considerations for adoption and training
  September 23, 2016 11:00 AM - Register

- Behavioral Health Resources for Families: Updates for GA Schools
  September 27, 2016 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM
  Register 11:00 Session  Register 2:00 Session (Repeat of 11AM)

- Si Se Puede!! (Yes, You Can!): Building School Counselor and Latino Parent Partnerships to Promote Student Success
  September 28, 2016, 2:00 PM - Register

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