



# Attendance Works

Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

## How to Conduct a Successful Data Analysis

### Step 1. Find Out What Data is Available

Consult with the school district or districts to find out:

- Do you collect attendance data electronically?
- Do you track just average daily attendance for the school or look at the number of absences for each students?
- Do you analyze patterns of attendance?
- Does your data system track the attendance for each student using a unique student identifier? (Note: Using data maintained for each student by the district vs. individual schools is important for tallying up the absences for mobile students as they move across schools.)

### Step 2. Crunch the Data

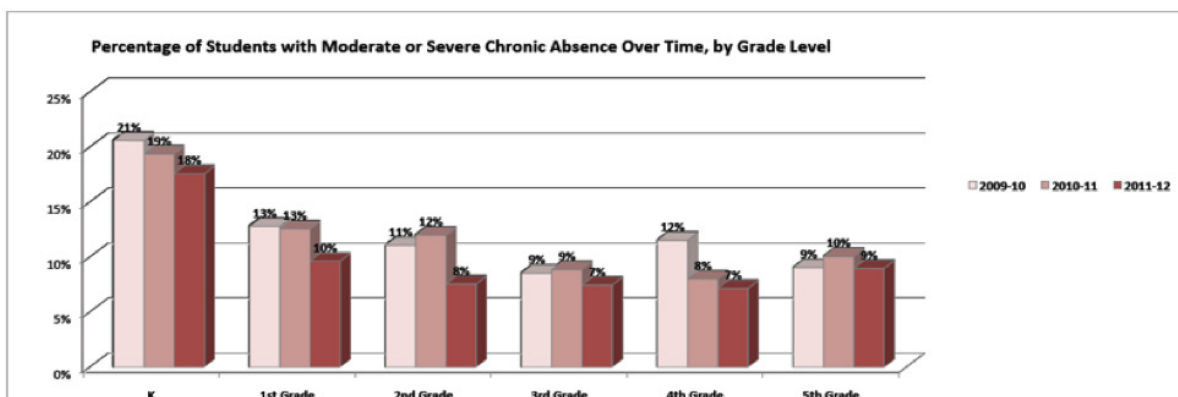
If the data and capacity exist, then district staff should be able to generate an analysis that shows the number and percentage of students who are chronically absent (missing 10 percent or more of school including all absences, excused and unexcused). To simplify the process, Attendance Works offers free tools for analyzing chronic absence patterns in districts and schools. Once your student attendance data has been extracted from your district's student information system and pasted into the District Attendance Tracking Tool, you can see the patterns of chronic absence in your community. The DATT and SATT create reports which show chronic absence rates over time. They also disaggregate the chronic absence rates by school, grade, ethnicity, gender, zip code, English Learner status, Special Education status, and Free and Reduced Price Lunch status.

#### Sample DATT Report: Chronic Absence Over Time

To see more sample reports from the DATT, click here (see attached DATT case study with anonymous reports). To learn more about the District Attendance Tracking Tool and the School Attendance Tracking Tool, click here:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/>

Very large districts that have more than 65,000 students enrolled in grades K-5 will not be able to use the DATT due to the spreadsheet's capacity limit. However, these districts can still calculate chronic absence by school and by grade.



If the school district can't do the analysis itself:

- Use the city's information office to crunch the data
- Invite the local university to participate using students and professors
- Tap philanthropic support to pay for a professional research firm.

When using outside sources, take care to vet the preliminary findings with the district leadership before public release to ensure the results appear valid.

### Step 3. Scour the Data for Patterns

If the capacity exists, in house or externally, produce a more complex analysis, which includes some or all of the following additional elements:

- The percentage and number of students who are severely chronically absent (missing 20 percent or more of school), indicating the number of students requiring intensive supports
- The percentage and number of students with satisfactory attendance (missing 5 percent or less of school. If few students have satisfactory attendance, then it suggests that the school community may not have a culture of attendance where going to school is considered the norm.
- Attendance patterns by sub-populations including for student on free and reduced price meals, English Language Learners and ethnic and racial groups
- Mapping of neighborhoods most affected by chronic absence by using student address information. Figure 3 is a map of attendance patterns by census tracts in Oakland, Calif.

Districts and schools should use the data to discern patterns of poor attendance and derive solutions. These materials should help schools and districts assess the factors leading to chronic absence. Schools and districts can also assess their own attendance policies.

- [Contributing factors toolkit](#)
- [School self-assessment](#)
- [District self-assessment](#)

Figure 3

