

# Analyzing Chronic Absence in Your Schools

## Using the K-5 School Attendance Tracking Tool (SATT)

### School Case Studies

These case studies describe the analysis of the attendance data for two typical K-5 elementary schools. They walk through four of the ten reports that the SATT produces, as outlined below:

- Tab A: Chronic absence by grade, by year
- Tab B: Chronic absence by race/ethnicity
- Tab C: Chronic absence by special needs status
- Tab D: List of students with moderate or severe chronic absence

The complete set of reports that the SATT provides also includes a comparison of chronic absence with ADA over time, a summary of key school-level risk indicators over time, and chronic absence by grade overall, by gender, by English learner status, and by eligibility for free or reduced price lunch.

Following the SATT reports are questions that should be considered in analyzing the outputs from the tool, including some insights from Attendance Works on what the data reveal. We recommend printing out the reports along with the written discussion and referring to them as you make your way through the questions.

***Note: School 1 in this case study corresponds to “School 13” and School 2 corresponds to “School 10” in the accompanying District Attendance Tracking Tool (DATT) case study.***



## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1. **Is chronic absence getting better or worse at each of these schools?**
2. **What does chronic absence look like across grade levels? What are the attendance patterns of cohorts of students in each school?**
3. **Is satisfactory attendance getting better or worse at each school?**
4. **How do the attendance patterns differ over time across schools? Can we derive any hypotheses about how these schools are approaching attendance issues differently?**
5. **Do certain racial/ethnic sub-populations of students have more chronic absenteeism at each school?**
6. **What does looking at both percentages and absolute numbers of students tell us about these sub-populations?**
7. **Do attendance patterns differ for students with and without special needs at each of these schools?**
8. **Can we infer any contrasts between the schools by looking at sub-groups of students?**
9. **Which individual students are currently chronically absent or severely chronically absent?**

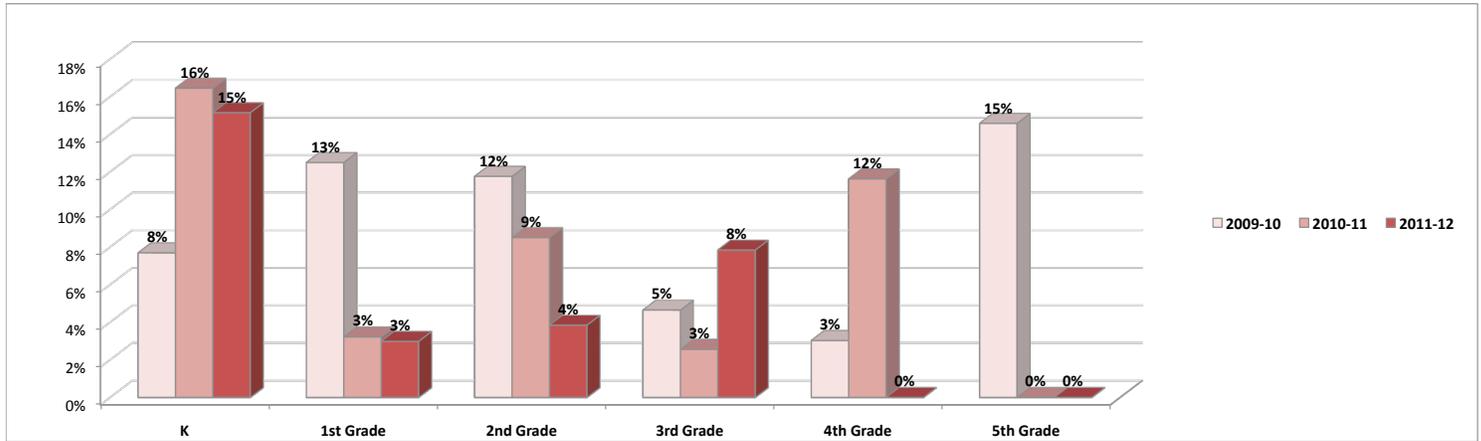
Have attendance patterns at this school changed over time?

DEFINITIONS:

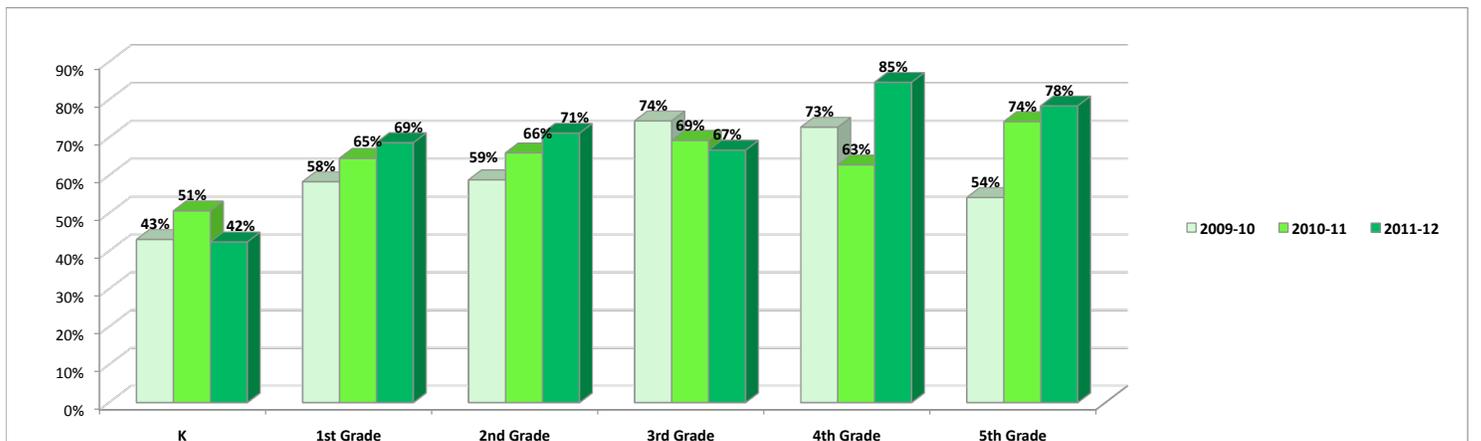
Severe chronic absence: Missing 20% or more of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing 10 -19.99% of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing 10% or more school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing 5-9.99% of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing less than 5% of total school days

GRADE	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	NUMBER ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	PERCENT ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT Satisfactory Attendance	Total students
2011-12											
Grade K	1	2%	9	14%	10	15%	28	42%	28	42%	66
Grade 1	0	0%	2	3%	2	3%	19	28%	46	69%	67
Grade 2	0	0%	2	4%	2	4%	13	25%	37	71%	52
Grade 3	0	0%	4	8%	4	8%	13	25%	34	67%	51
Grade 4	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	15%	33	85%	39
Grade 5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	22%	29	78%	37
Totals	1	0%	17	5%	18	6%	87	28%	207	66%	312
2010-11											
Grade K	3	4%	10	13%	13	16%	26	33%	40	51%	79
Grade 1	0	0%	2	3%	2	3%	20	32%	40	65%	62
Grade 2	0	0%	4	9%	4	9%	12	26%	31	66%	47
Grade 3	0	0%	1	3%	1	3%	11	28%	27	69%	39
Grade 4	0	0%	5	12%	5	12%	11	26%	27	63%	43
Grade 5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	26%	23	74%	31
Totals	3	1%	22	7%	25	8%	88	29%	188	62%	301
2009-10											
Grade K	1	2%	4	6%	5	8%	32	49%	28	43%	65
Grade 1	0	0%	6	13%	6	13%	14	29%	28	58%	48
Grade 2	0	0%	6	12%	6	12%	15	29%	30	59%	51
Grade 3	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%	9	21%	32	74%	43
Grade 4	0	0%	1	3%	1	3%	8	24%	24	73%	33
Grade 5	0	0%	7	15%	7	15%	15	31%	26	54%	48
Totals	1	0%	26	9%	27	9%	93	32%	168	58%	288

Percentage of Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence Over Time, by Grade Level  
 Sample School A



Percentage of Students with Satisfactory Attendance Over Time, by Grade Level  
 Sample School A



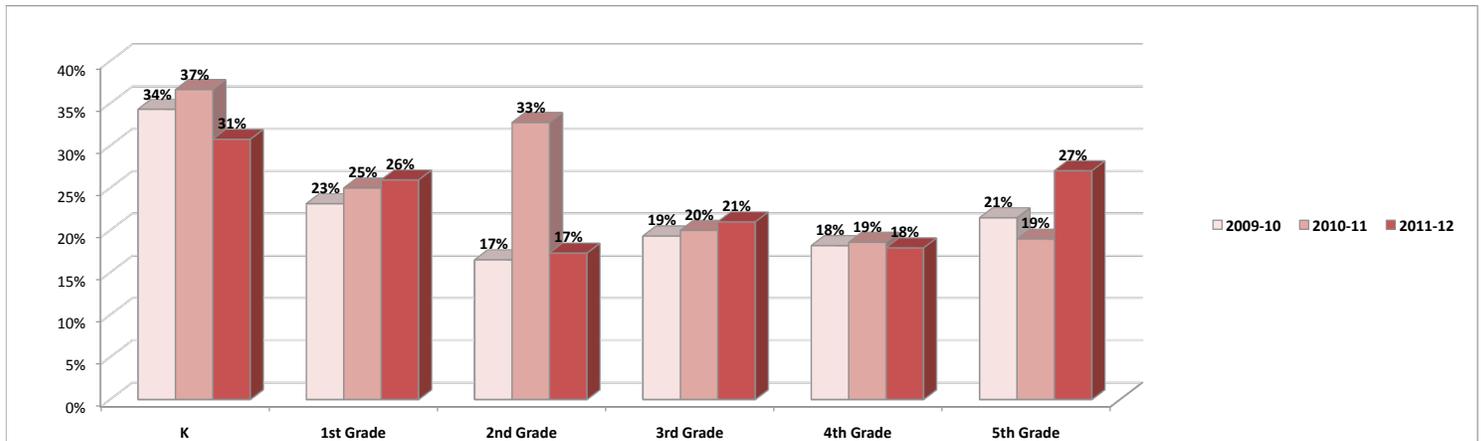
# Have attendance patterns at this school changed over time?

**DEFINITIONS:**

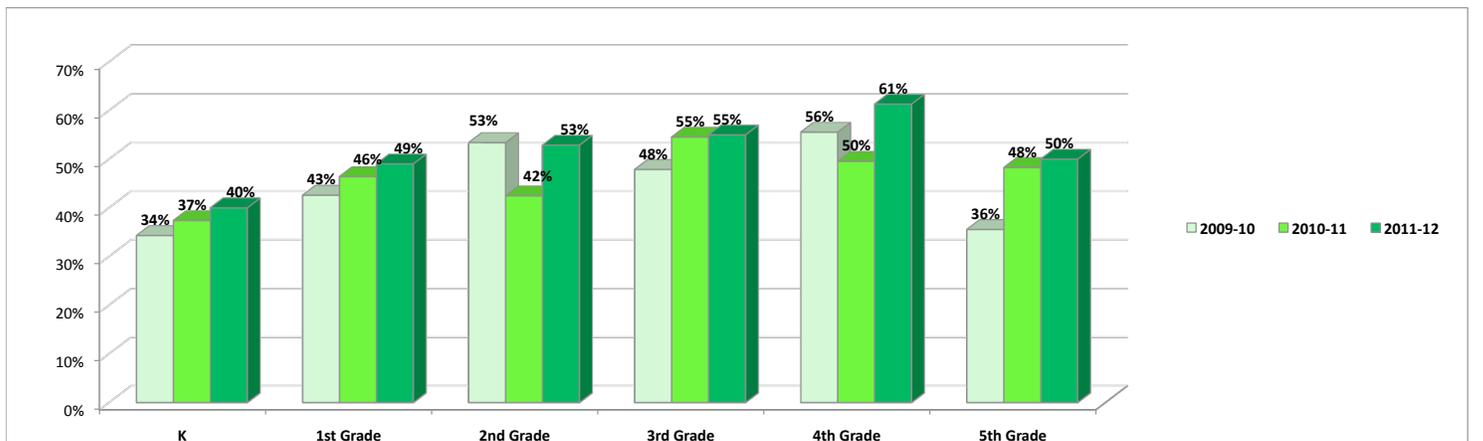
Severe chronic absence: Missing **20% or more** of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing **10 -19.99%** of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing **10% or more** school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing **5-9.99%** of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing **less than 5%** of total school days

GRADE	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	NUMBER ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	PERCENT ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT Satisfactory Attendance	Total students
2011-12											
Grade K	17	13%	23	18%	40	31%	38	29%	52	40%	130
Grade 1	7	7%	20	19%	27	26%	26	25%	51	49%	104
Grade 2	2	2%	16	15%	18	17%	31	30%	55	53%	104
Grade 3	0	0%	21	21%	21	21%	24	24%	55	55%	100
Grade 4	0	0%	19	18%	19	18%	22	21%	65	61%	106
Grade 5	6	5%	27	22%	33	27%	28	23%	61	50%	122
Totals	32	5%	126	19%	158	24%	169	25%	339	51%	666
2010-11											
Grade K	10	8%	38	29%	48	37%	34	26%	49	37%	131
Grade 1	4	4%	24	21%	28	25%	32	29%	52	46%	112
Grade 2	4	4%	33	29%	37	33%	28	25%	48	42%	113
Grade 3	3	3%	19	17%	22	20%	28	25%	60	55%	110
Grade 4	2	2%	19	17%	21	19%	36	32%	56	50%	113
Grade 5	2	2%	20	17%	22	19%	38	33%	56	48%	116
Totals	25	4%	153	22%	178	26%	196	28%	321	46%	695
2009-10											
Grade K	11	8%	36	26%	47	34%	43	31%	47	34%	137
Grade 1	3	3%	22	20%	25	23%	37	34%	46	43%	108
Grade 2	1	1%	16	16%	17	17%	31	30%	55	53%	103
Grade 3	1	1%	22	18%	23	19%	39	33%	57	48%	119
Grade 4	2	2%	16	16%	18	18%	26	26%	55	56%	99
Grade 5	5	4%	24	18%	29	21%	58	43%	48	36%	135
Totals	23	3%	136	19%	159	23%	234	33%	308	44%	701

Percentage of Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence Over Time, by Grade Level  
 Sample School D



Percentage of Students with Satisfactory Attendance Over Time, by Grade Level  
 Sample School D



How many students in different racial/ethnic groups at this school are at risk based on their attendance?

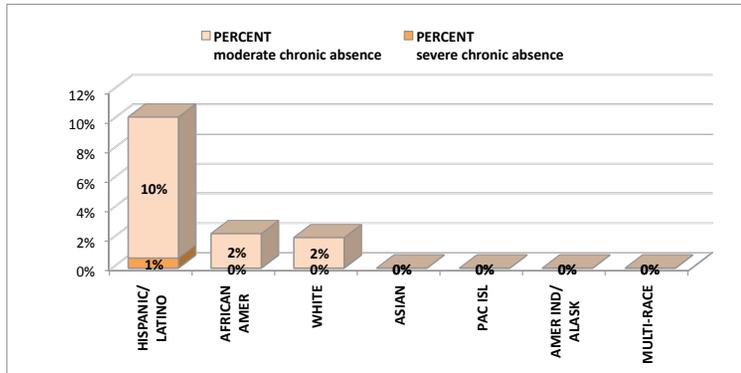
**DEFINITIONS:**

Severe chronic absence: Missing 20% or more of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing 10 -19.99% of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing 10% or more school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing 5-9.99% of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing less than 5% of total school days

RACE/ETHNICITY	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT satisfactory attendance	Total number of Grade K - 5 students
HISPANIC/LATINO	1	1%	14	10%	15	10%	41	28%	91	62%	147
AFRICAN AMER	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%	11	26%	31	72%	43
WHITE	0	0%	2	2%	2	2%	27	28%	68	70%	97
ASIAN	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2
PAC ISL	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0
AMER IND/ALASK	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	3
MULTI-RACE	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	35%	13	65%	20
UNKNOWN	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0
TOTAL	1	0%	17	5%	18	6%	87	28%	207	66%	312

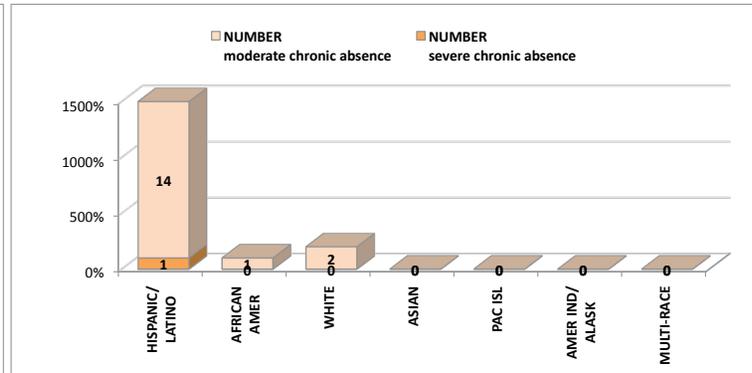
What percentage of students in each race/ethnicity have moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School A  
2011-12



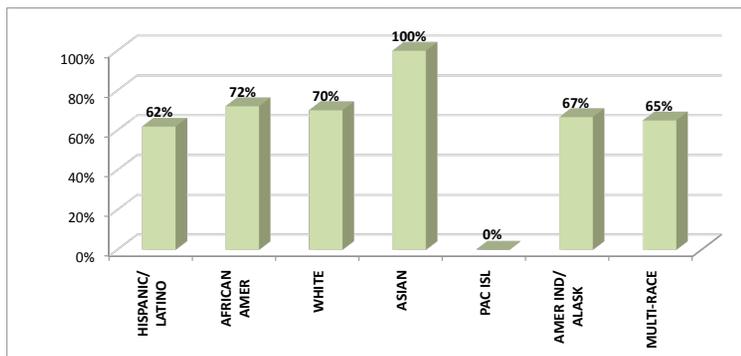
How many students in each race/ethnicity have moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School A  
2011-12



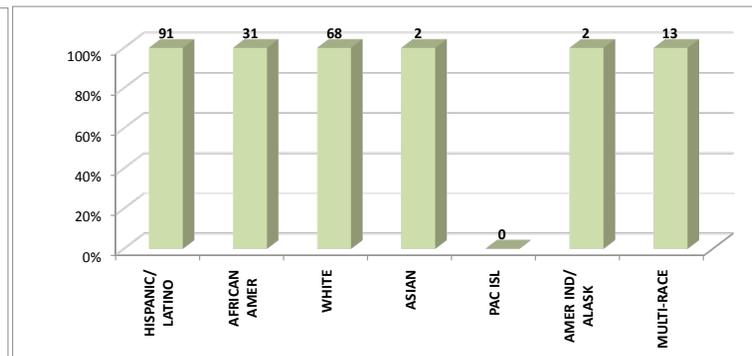
What percentage of students in each race/ethnicity have satisfactory attendance?

Sample School A  
2011-12



How many students in each race/ethnicity have satisfactory attendance?

Sample School A  
2011-12



How many students in different racial/ethnic groups at this school are at risk based on their attendance?

**DEFINITIONS:**

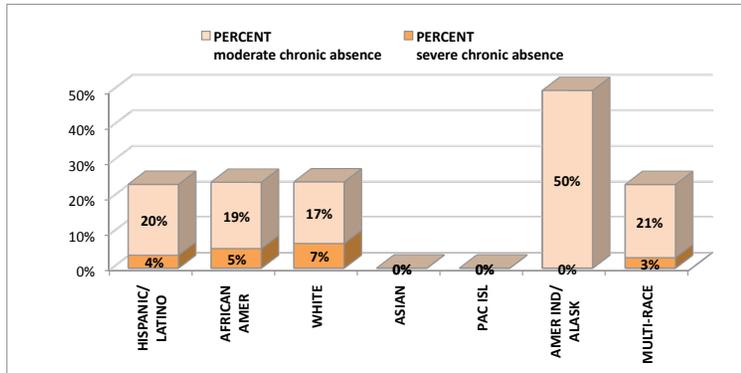
Severe chronic absence: Missing 20% or more of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing 10 -19.99% of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing 10% or more school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing 5-9.99% of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing less than 5% of total school days

RACE/ETHNICITY	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT satisfactory attendance	Total number of Grade K - 5 students
HISPANIC/LATINO	12	4%	66	20%	78	24%	95	29%	158	48%	331
AFRICAN AMER	5	5%	17	19%	22	24%	15	16%	54	59%	91
WHITE	14	7%	35	17%	49	24%	45	22%	108	53%	202
ASIAN	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3
PAC ISL	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	67%	1	33%	3
AMER IND/ALASK	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2
MULTI-RACE	1	3%	7	21%	8	24%	11	32%	15	44%	34
UNKNOWN	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>666</b>

What percentage of students in each race/ethnicity have moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School D

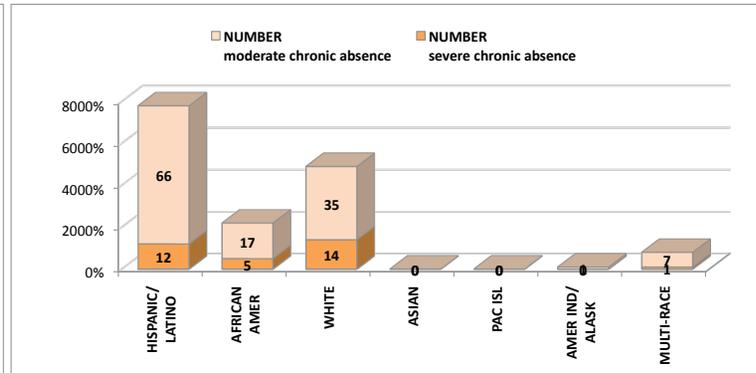
2011-12



How many students in each race/ethnicity have moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School D

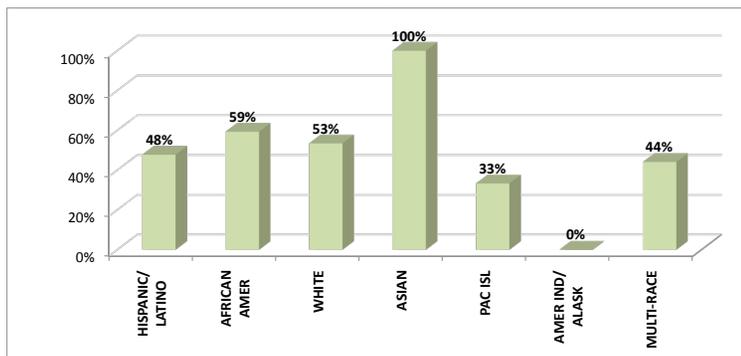
2011-12



What percentage of students in each race/ethnicity have satisfactory attendance?

Sample School D

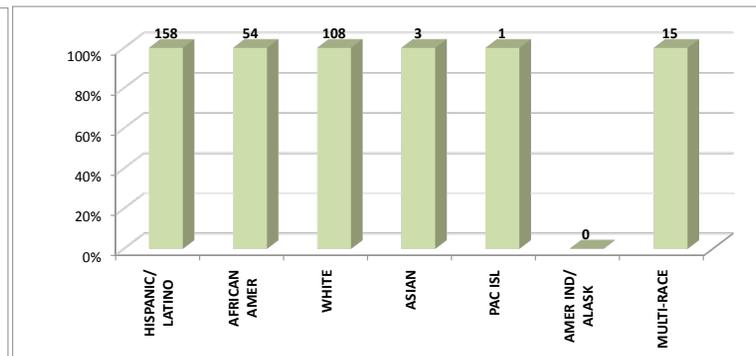
2011-12



How many students in each race/ethnicity have satisfactory attendance?

Sample School D

2011-12



To what extent are students with and without special needs at risk based on attendance?

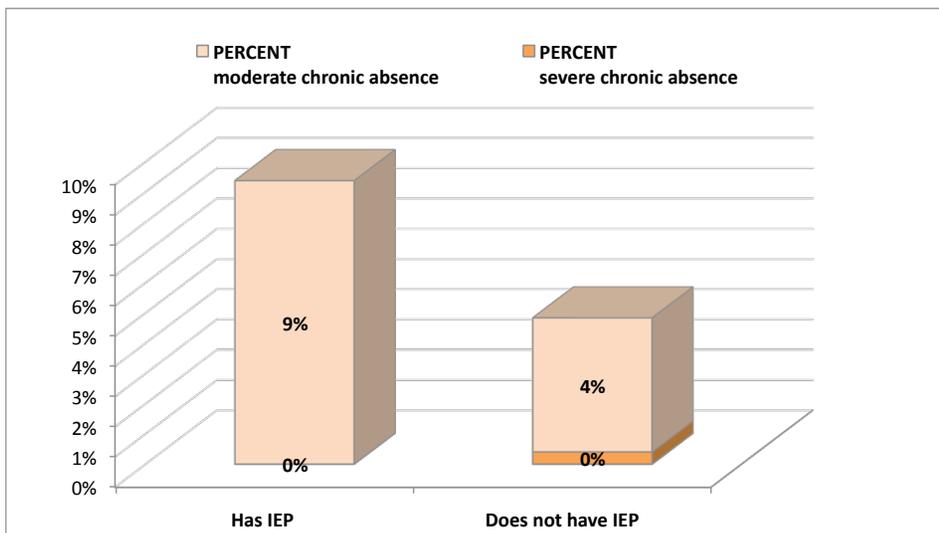
**DEFINITIONS:**

Severe chronic absence: Missing **20% or more** of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing **10 -19.99%** of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing **10% or more** school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing **5-9.99%** of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing **less than 5%** of total school days

IEP STATUS	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	NUMBER ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	PERCENT ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT satisfactory attendance	Total number of Grade K - 5 students
Has IEP	0	0%	6	9%	6	9%	15	23%	43	67%	64
Does not have IEP	1	0%	11	4%	12	5%	72	29%	164	66%	248
ALL STUDENTS	1	0%	17	5%	18	6%	87	28%	207	66%	312

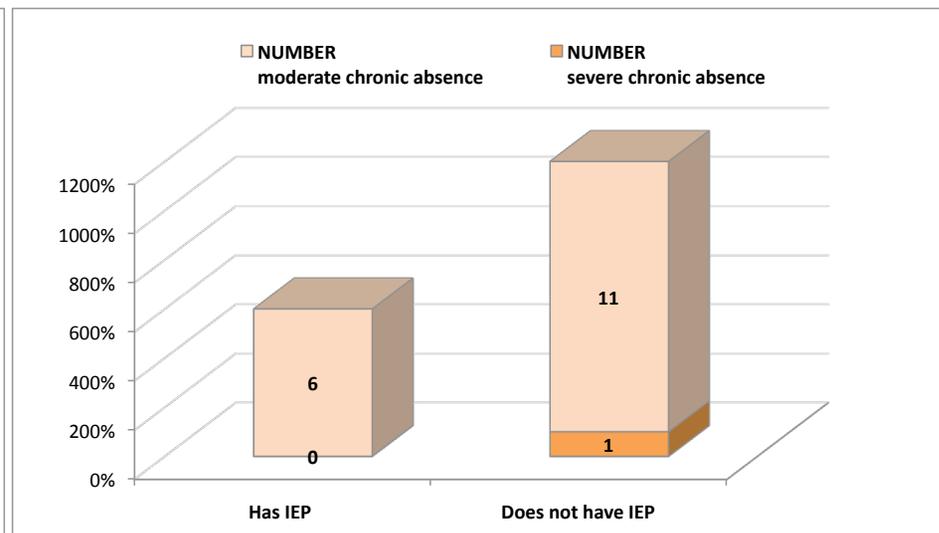
Do students with special needs have higher rates of moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School A  
2011-12



How many students with and without special needs are chronically absent?

Sample School A  
2011-12



To what extent are students with and without special needs at risk based on attendance?

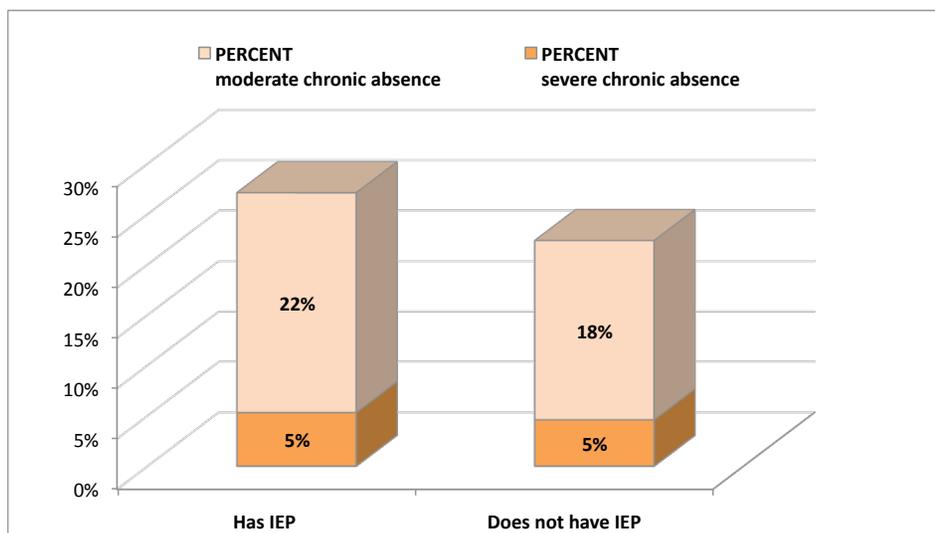
**DEFINITIONS:**

Severe chronic absence: Missing **20% or more** of total school days  
 Moderate chronic absence: Missing **10 -19.99%** of total school days  
 ALL chronic absence: Missing **10% or more** school days (sums moderate + severe chronic)  
 At-risk attendance: Missing **5-9.99%** of total school days  
 Satisfactory attendance: Missing **less than 5%** of total school days

IEP STATUS	NUMBER severe chronic absence	PERCENT severe chronic absence	NUMBER moderate chronic absence	PERCENT moderate chronic absence	NUMBER ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	PERCENT ALL chronic absence (severe + moderate)	NUMBER at-risk attendance	PERCENT at-risk attendance	NUMBER satisfactory attendance	PERCENT satisfactory attendance	Total number of Grade K - 5 students
Has IEP	10	5%	41	22%	51	27%	45	24%	92	49%	188
Does not have IEP	22	5%	85	18%	107	22%	124	26%	247	52%	478
ALL STUDENTS	32	5%	126	19%	158	24%	169	25%	339	51%	666

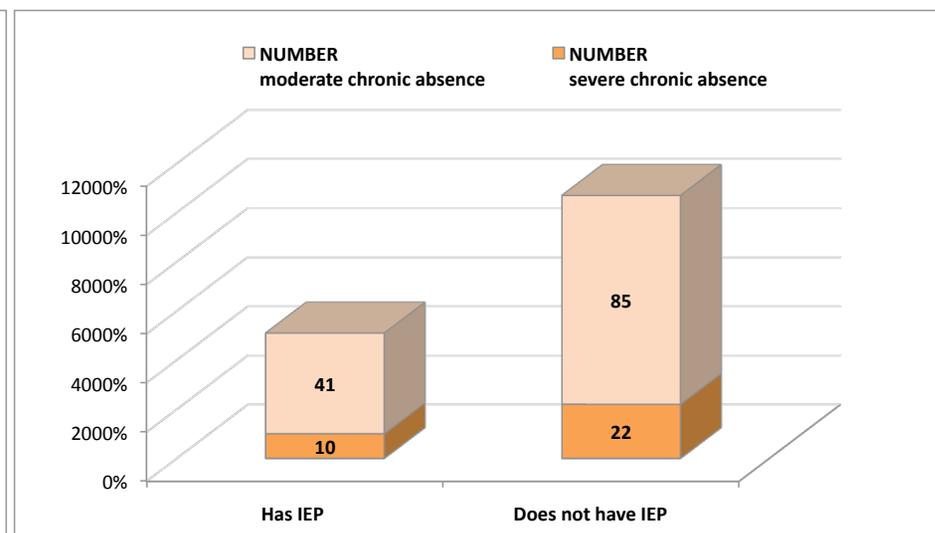
Do students with special needs have higher rates of moderate or severe chronic absence?

Sample School D  
2011-12



How many students with and without special needs are chronically absent?

Sample School D  
2011-12



Which students at this school are at risk?

List of All Grade K -5 Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence

Sample School A

2011-12

First Name	Middle Name/Initial	Last Name	Absence Type
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	severe chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk

## Which students at this school are at risk?

### List of All Grade K -5 Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence

#### Sample School D

2011-12

First Name	Middle Name/Initial	Last Name	Absence Type
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	severe chronic
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	severe chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	at risk
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	chronic
Student X		Student X	satisfactory
Student X		Student X	at risk

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

### 1. Is chronic absence getting better or worse at each of these schools?

*What we saw:*

#### **For School 1:**

- We look first at School 1, Tab A, which shows chronic absence by grade, by year. Although there is some inconsistency in attendance trends across grades over the past three years, overall chronic absence is decreasing. This past year saw some increase in chronic absenteeism in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but in all other grades chronic absenteeism declined.

#### **For School 2:**

- We now look at Tab A for School 2. To start with, chronic absence levels in this school are very high. And unlike in School 1, it is less clear whether chronic absence has gotten better or worse over the last three years. While chronic absence decreased in three grades from the previous year, in three grades it increased. The overall trend for this school is not a positive one.

### **What does chronic absence look like across grade levels? What are the attendance patterns of cohorts of students in each school?**

*What we saw:*

#### **For School 1:**

- We continue to look at Tab A for School 1. It is typical for chronic absence rates in elementary schools to be highest in grades K and 1, then to dip in grades 2 and 3 and gradually increase by grade 5. In School 1, chronic absence is similarly high in Kindergarten; however, the pattern following Kindergarten is different than we typically see. Chronic absence is impressively low in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, but then it rises, with chronic absence in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade twice that of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in 2011-12. Levels are then impressively low in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.
- When we see unusual patterns in attendance data, or unexpected changes from year to year, it is always important to look into data sources to be sure we have confidence in the accuracy of the data. Assuming the data is accurate for School 1, we can then consider what the reported patterns suggest. In Kindergarten, chronic absence is lower in 2011-12 than in 2010-11, which is a good thing; however, it is still significantly higher than in other grades and is therefore an opportunity for improvement. And for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the unexpected jump from 2010-11 to 2011-12 deserves attention: What caused the increase and can we do something to prevent next year's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from seeing this same increase, and/or should we intervene to prevent this 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohort (next year's 4<sup>th</sup> grade) from continuing this trajectory?

- In general, looking at cohorts of students over time can provide interesting insights into attendance behavior and practice. For example, we can examine the chronic absence levels of the cohort that was in Kindergarten in 2009-10, in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 2010-11, and in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in 2011-12 (this corresponds to the pale pink bar in K, the medium pink bar in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and the dark pink bar in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade). In Kindergarten, this cohort's chronic absence level was at 8%; it decreased to 3% in the following year and then increased slightly to 4% the year after. Schools may want to keep an eye on this cohort to ensure that their absenteeism does not increase the following year as well. Another interesting example is the cohort of students who were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in 2009-10. Their absence rate increased sharply to 12% in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, then decreased sharply to 0% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. What about the students, schools, or teachers might help explain these significant changes?

### For School 2:

- We refer to Tab A for School 2. Chronic absence levels are remarkably high in Kindergarten, and though there was a decrease in 2011-12 from 37% to 31%, there remains considerable room for improvement. Additionally, while 2011-12 chronic absence has generally followed the typical pattern of decreasing after 1<sup>st</sup> grade and slowly increasing up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the levels of chronic absence in all grades is notably high. In particular, the jump to 27% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12, up from 19% the year before is very concerning, especially given that this is a transition year leading up into middle school.
- Looking at cohorts can again provide a more detailed picture of the attendance trends in this school. For example, the cohort of students who were in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 2009-10 had a chronic absence rate of 23% in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, then 33% in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and then back down to 21% in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Schools may want to examine what caused that spike to prevent them in the future. Additionally, the cohort of students who were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in 2009-10 had steady chronic absence rates that year and the following year in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (19% and 19% respectively), but were absent dramatically more in 5<sup>th</sup> grade (27% chronically absent). What caused this and how can schools intervene to get these students back on the right track?

## 2. Is satisfactory attendance getting better or worse at each school?

*What we saw:*

### For School 1:

- We continue to look at School 1, Tab A. Generally, satisfactory attendance seems to be improving. With the exception of Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, 2011-12 saw the highest levels of satisfactory attendance in three years. Interestingly, in Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 2011-12 had the lowest satisfactory attendance rates in those three years. These patterns suggest there is likely opportunity to improve attendance practices in these grades.

### For School 2:

- We continue to look at Tab A for School 2. The rates of satisfactory attendance at this school are relatively low; however, they generally have been improving over the last three years. Nonetheless, the fact that these levels are so low—for example, only 50% of this past year’s 5<sup>th</sup> grades had satisfactory attendance—is troubling.

**3. How do the attendance patterns differ over time across schools? Can we derive any hypotheses about how these schools are approaching attendance issues differently?**

*What we saw:*

- Overall, the chronic absence rates for School 1 are impressively low, while for School 2 they are impressively high. Additionally, looking at the changes in absenteeism from grade to grade suggest that School 1 is doing more to intervene and improve its students’ attendance.

In both schools, chronic absence rates are highest in Kindergarten. However, they are significantly lower in School 1 relative to School 2. This suggests that there is a stronger culture of attendance at School 1 even in this first year of elementary school. Families, community partners, teachers, school administration and school leadership all contribute to this culture so we cannot say by looking at these reports what drives this distinction. However, it is worth noting that when we compare these schools’ characteristics using information included in Attendance Works’ accompanying DATT case study<sup>1</sup>, 94% of the students at School 1 receive free or reduced price lunch, compared to 91% of the students at School 2. The student populations at these two schools are relatively similar.

Furthermore, in the past two years at School 1, chronic absence in 1<sup>st</sup> grade drops to just a fifth of what it is in Kindergarten and remains below 10% all through the elementary grades. The proportional drop after Kindergarten in School 2 is significantly less, and chronic absence remains high through the elementary grades. These reports suggest that School 1 is intervening to improve and maintain good attendance, while School 2 is not.

**4. Do certain racial/ethnic sub-populations of students have more chronic absenteeism at each school?**

*What we saw:*

**For School 1:**

- We turn now to School 1, Tab B, which shows chronic absence broken out by race/ethnicity. Chronic absence levels in this school are highest among Hispanic/Latino students, with 10% chronically absent. This group is followed by African-American students and White students, who each have significantly lower rates of 2%.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Tab B in the DATT Case Study. School 1 corresponds to “School 13” in the DATT and School 2 corresponds to “School 10.”

- Note that in this case study, we discuss racial/ethnic subgroups of students and students with and without special needs (below). The SATT also produces reports on chronic absence broken out by gender, by eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, and by English learner status. The data for all of these sub-populations of students should be similarly analyzed.

### **For School 2:**

- We refer now to School 2, Tab B. Chronic absenteeism is highest among Hispanic/Latino, African-American, and White students. All of these subgroups have chronic absence levels of 24%. 149 of the 158 chronically absent students at this school fall into one of those three sub-populations.

## **5. What does looking at both percentages and absolute numbers of students tell us about these sub-populations?**

*What we saw:*

### **For School 1:**

- We continue to look at Tab B for School 1. At this school, the high rate of chronic absence among Hispanic/Latino students translates into a relatively high absolute number of Hispanic/Latino students. 15 Hispanic/Latino students are chronically absent, compared to 1 African-American student and 2 White students. Although chronic absence is greater among the Hispanic/Latino subgroup, it is worth noting that 15 students is still a very small group. Given the small size of this school and its overall low chronic absence rates, the number of students with attendance issues is very manageable.

### **For School 2:**

- We continue to look at Tab B for School 2. Upon first glance, it may seem that the American Indian/Alaskan Native student population has the greatest issue with chronic absence, and that the Multiracial population has a problem as great as that of Hispanic/Latino, African-American, and White students. While proportionally this may be true, a look at the absolute number of students falling in the chronic absence category suggests that focusing on these subgroups would be a misallocation of resources. Because the number of American Indian/Alaskan Native and Multiracial students in School 2 are so small, only 9 of these students are actually chronically absent. They are far outweighed by the large number of students in other subgroups who are chronically absent. Indeed, because of the large proportion of the student population that is Hispanic/Latino or White, their high rates of chronic absence translate into very large absolute numbers of chronically absent students (78 and 49 respectively).

## **6. Do attendance patterns differ for students with and without special needs at each of these schools?**

*What we saw:*

**For School 1:**

- Refer to School 1, Tab C, which shows chronic absence broken out by students with and without IEPs. At School 1, the chronic absence rate for students with IEPs, is nearly twice that of students without IEPs (9% compared to 5%). However, because the subgroup of students without IEPs is significantly larger than those with, the absolute number of chronically students is greater for those students without special needs (12 compared to 6).
- A higher rate of chronic absence among students with special needs is a fairly common trend that we see across schools.

**For School 2:**

- Refer now to School 2, Tab C. Again, the percentage of chronically absent students is greater among the sub-population of students with an IEP; however, the relative difference is smaller than at School 1. The chronic absence rate is high for students with special needs (27%), but it is also fairly high for those without (22%). Again, because the number of students without IEPs is larger than the number with, the absolute number of chronically absent students is greater for students without special needs.

**7. Can we infer any contrasts between the schools by looking at sub-groups of students?**

*What we saw:*

- The racial/ethnic breakdown of students is similar at both schools, with around half of the student body being Hispanic/Latino and a little less than a third being White. However, the proportion of White students who are chronically absent at School 1 is considerably less than at School 2. It is unclear from these reports why that is, but may be an area for further investigation.
- The attendance patterns across students with and without special needs are similar at School 1 and School 2. The proportions of students with and without special needs are somewhat different though. At School 1, a little over 20% of the student body has special needs; at School 2, that percentage is around 28%. Whether or not this different profile of students has any effect on the high chronic absence rates of School 2 is another possible area of examination.

**8. Which individual students are currently chronically absent or severely chronically absent?**

*What we saw:*

- Turn to Tab D for both School 1 and School 2. The SATT produces a comprehensive list of students in each school as well as their absence status (severe chronic, moderate chronic, at risk, and satisfactory). You can filter the list using the autofilter built into the tool to show only students with severe or moderate chronic absence to identify those who need support and targets for intervention. School 1, Tab D and School 2, Tab D show these filtered results.

~~~~

***Is there anything else you see emerging from the data?***