



The 50% Challenge: Restoring Attendance, Strengthening Outcomes

Before the pandemic, about one out of six public school students were chronically absent. That rate [skyrocketed](#) across the board during the Covid pandemic, increasing across all political, socioeconomic and geographic lines. This dramatic increase underscores a crucial point: while schools face many contentious issues, chronic absence stands apart as a critical, non-partisan emergency that demands immediate and comprehensive attention. While the absenteeism challenge is daunting, it is not insurmountable. When education leaders prioritize and persistently address chronic absence, real progress follows.

That's why we are calling on all state leaders to embrace the bold but achievable goal of cutting chronic absence by 50% over five years by joining The 50% Challenge.

What is The 50% Challenge?

An initiative launched by Attendance Works, EdTrust and Nat Malkus with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) to challenge everyone, beginning with states, to cut chronic absence by 50% over five years.

Why Join The 50% Challenge?

This is an opportunity to learn from peers, gain valuable resources, and collectively demonstrate our ability to ensure all children have the opportunity to succeed through consistent attendance. Benefits include:

- **Peer Learning Network:** Connect and collaborate with other states dedicated to improving attendance.
- **Early Data Access:** Gain early access to national data analysis conducted by Attendance Works and AEI.
- **Communication Support:** Receive sample media advisory to amplify your state's participation and leadership.
- **Expert Consultation:** Tap into the expertise of the Attendance Works team for strategic advice.
- **Essential Resources:** Access the comprehensive Attendance Works roadmap toolkit to guide your efforts.

What is Expected of Participating States?

To contribute to the collective impact, we ask that your state:

- **Designate Key Contacts:** Identify a team lead/contact for technical assistance and a communications contact.
- **Set a Measurable Goal:** Establish a clear and measurable goal for reducing chronic absence within the next five years.
- **Build a Dedicated Team:** Convene a team to drive this important work.
- **Develop a Strategic Plan:** Create a comprehensive plan outlining your approach to achieving the attendance goal.
- **Invest Resources:** Dedicate resources including in-kind contributions or leveraged funding, to support the implementation of your plan.

Ready to join?

Fill out [this form](#).

