

Press Release

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SAN FRANCISCO, June 13, 2023 – Most states now publish chronic absence data online, according to a [new report](#) from Attendance Works, a non-profit initiative. With chronic absence surging in many states, it's more important than ever that everyone is able to understand the scale and scope of the nation's attendance crisis.

“Making chronic absence data accessible to the public offers everyone, from administrators to teachers to elected officials and community organizations an opportunity to see where and for which student groups challenges to attendance are the greatest,” explains Hedy Chang, executive director of Attendance Works.

“When data is published in a timely manner, it helps policy makers and practitioners to take preventative action before students become further disengaged from school,” Chang says.

[*Monitoring Data Matters Even More: A Review of State Attendance Data Policy and Practice in School Year 2022-23*](#), released today, underscores that state attendance policy and practice is evolving to adapt to the disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic. The report includes [a table](#) describing the attendance policy and practice as well as the available chronic absence data from 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Other significant findings include:

- Chronic absence continues to be defined in a similar manner across the country. The vast majority of states (42 out of 51) define chronic absence as missing 10% of school for any reason. Seeking to take a more positive approach but using an equivalent measure, a few (3) states monitor when students show up 90% of the time.
- Most states include all types of absences, regardless of reason, when calculating chronic absence rates. As seen during the pandemic, excessive excused absences can still affect students' connection to school, well-being and academic progress, especially if students do not have access to resources to help them make up for lost opportunities to learn in the classroom. In a handful of states, absences can be excluded for varying circumstances.

- Chronic absence data is typically available to the public by district, school and a variety of student populations. Our review reveals that more states should make data available by grade so it is easy to spot elevated levels of absenteeism for particular levels — which is common in kindergarten, 9th and 12th grade — and take steps to address barriers early in the year to prevent poor attendance.
- Definitions of what constitutes a day of attendance vary among states, with even greater diversity when defining a day of attendance for distance learning. A common definition of a day of attendance is important for comparing data from different schools and districts within and across states. Easy-to-access state data allows everyone to monitor, detect and address inequitable access to learning opportunities, as well as identify promising practices worth adopting in other places.
- States are just beginning to collect data that would allow them to analyze disparities in unexcused absences and truancy. Truancy related policies and practices existed long before the concept of chronic absenteeism was introduced and affect responses to students and families when they miss school. Research suggests overuse of the “unexcused” label for absences could undermine efforts to improve attendance for some students.

Monitoring Data Matters Even More offers recommendations for states that include effective state-wide attendance procedures and policies for districts and schools. The recommendations focus on what states can do to ensure data is accurate, comparable and transparent and address how states can promote using attendance data to inform action.

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes equal opportunities to learn and advances student success by reducing chronic absence. Learn more at www.attendanceworks.org.