

## Press Release



### Contact:

Catherine Cooney  
Communications Director  
202-487-0048  
[Catherine@attendanceworks.org](mailto:Catherine@attendanceworks.org)

## **New Report Calls for Public Release of Chronic Absence Data to Support Recovery from Pandemic**

*Monitoring daily attendance combined with publishing chronic absence data ensures recovery interventions reach the millions of students who are missing significant amounts of school*

SAN FRANCISCO, June 9, 2022 – Two years after the pandemic shifted millions of students to distance learning, most states have resumed requiring daily attendance taking across all mode of learning, a new analysis shows. Daily attendance taking can sound an alert as soon as students begin to experience difficulties with showing up to class.

[Monitoring Who is Missing too Much School: A Review of State Policy and Practice in School Year 2021-22](#), released today by Attendance Works, underlines the reality that chronic absenteeism has blossomed into a full-scale crisis. The number of students missing 10% or more of school days has doubled, or in some cases tripled, in many places. Historically disadvantage groups are affected the most.

“Although there are skyrocketing rates of chronic absence in communities throughout the country, now is not the time to shy away from monitoring and publicly releasing student attendance data,” said Hedy Chang, Attendance Works Executive Director and Founder.

The analysis builds on our 2021 state policy scan, [Are Students Present and Accounted For?](#), which found that daily attendance taking – which had been a norm prior to Covid 19 – was only required by 31 states and District of Columbia in school year 2020-21. The new analysis shows that the number of states that have reinstated daily attendance taking has grown, and most now require daily attendance taking across all modes of learning (in-person and distance).

The analysis also shows that most states now allow long-term distance learning and in many cases short-term distance learning during quarantine. Offering multiple modes of learning enables students to stay connected and learning even when they face barriers to getting to school in person, whether the challenge is quarantine, a lack of transportation, health care or other issues.

“States have an important role in guiding how schools and districts collect attendance and chronic absence data,” said Chang. “Well-crafted state policy that requires taking attendance daily and monitoring chronic absence is essential. Efforts to support student recovery following challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic are unlikely to have the desired results unless children and youth are present in school to benefit from the programming being offered,” said Chang.

Chronic absence data is more publicly available than ever before, according to the analysis. The majority of states are publishing chronic absence data for the 2020-21 school year. Many provide data broken down by school, district, ethnicity and special needs. Unfortunately, what defines a day of attendance continues to vary. As a result, comparing data within and across states can be challenging.

The brief shows how several states are moving forward with new practices. Connecticut for example, is publicly releasing data on a **monthly** basis. The public release of real-time data can assist states and districts to see which programs are working, and to intervene before students fall too far behind. The California Department of Education is publishing data by type of absence.

The brief offers two sets of recommendations for states to guide them as they continue to develop attendance policy and practice. The first describes state level policies to ensure accurate and comparable data collection and publication. The second offers suggestions for how states can use data to inform decisions about where to invest resources — including tutoring, mentoring, expanded learning, home visiting and health services— in student engagement and recovery.

“When data is released publicly, it offers families and community members a chance to review, and if numbers don’t seem realistic, to question the results, which helps improve the quality of the data so that investments in interventions reach the groups needing them most,” said Chang.



Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes equal opportunities to learn and advances student success by inspiring and catalyzing policies and practices that prevent and reduce chronic absence. Our website offers an array of strategies and downloadable tools to help schools, districts and states address chronic absenteeism. Learn more [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)