



Network to Advance State Attendance Policy and Practice



August 29 and 31, 2023

www.attendanceworks.org

INTRODUCTIONS

SHARE in the CHAT

- **Your name**
- **Agency/State**
- **What's "THE BUZZ"?**
Are there any emerging policy decisions or current events that have potential to change the landscape for attendance in your state?

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Health Guidance to Support Safe In-Person Learning**
- III. State Attendance Awareness Campaigns**
- IV. Attendance Legislation and the Attendance Playbook**
- V. Upcoming Learning Opportunities**
- VI. Evaluation**

Improving Attendance

How to keep children healthy and in school



Key Tips for Keeping Children Healthy and in School



Nutrition, Sleep & Exercise



Hygiene



Safety



Wellness



Engagement



Nutrition, Sleep and Exercise

Encourage students to:

- ✓ Eat a good breakfast every morning or be part of the school's breakfast program
- ✓ Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine
- ✓ Keep screens out of the bedroom and limit use prior to bedtime
- ✓ Stay active for 60 minutes a day



Hygiene

- ✓ Stress hand washing, particularly before eating, and after using the restroom
- ✓ Remind students to brush their teeth twice a day
- ✓ Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. Don't share cups, utensils, hair brushes or combs
- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into an elbow



Safety

- ✓ Remind children to wear a seatbelt during car rides, and a helmet when using a bike or skateboard
- ✓ If students walk to school, help them find a safe route to school and to travel with at least one friend. Encourage families to have a backup plan in case of bad weather



Wellness

- ✓ Ensure child visits their health care provider for:
 - A physical once a year
 - All recommended Immunizations, including Flu and Covid
 - Chronic health issues: asthma, diabetes, ect.
- ✓ Visit the dentist twice a year
- ✓ Encourage families to schedule routine (non-urgent) medical appointments outside of school hours
- ✓ School nurse or social worker connect families to resources if child doesn't have health or dental insurance,



Wellness


- ✓ Complete the school's annual health form
- ✓ Offer health (including vision) screenings in your school
- ✓ For children with asthma, make sure child's health care provider completes appropriate school forms to allow them to keep/carry any necessary medications at school
- ✓ For children with disabilities, work with families and health care provider to ensure appropriate supports and services
- ✓ Have a protocol in place and offer resources to students who have Covid or other contagious illnesses
- ✓ Provide educational support and resources to students who need to stay home due to prolonged illness



Engagement

- ✓ Create safe and welcoming and environments to increase children's engagement in school
- ✓ Connect and encourage participation in after school activities
- ✓ Offer resources to students experiencing anxiety
- ✓ Keep families informed about their child's attendance and academic progress

Check out the latest resource!



Health Guidance for Going to School

Showing up to school every day is critical for children's well-being, engagement and learning.

Make sure to send children to school if they are:




- Generally healthy and well.
- Participating in usual day-to-day activities.
- Children can even go to school if they:
 - Have a mild cold, which may include a runny nose and/or cough.
 - Have eye drainage without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.
 - Have a mild stomachache.
 - Have a mild rash with no other symptoms.
 - Have head lice. Though they are annoying and should be treated, lice are not a reason to exclude a child from school.
 - Haven't had a fever overnight and they have not taken fever-reducing medicine during that time.

Avoid keeping children at home unless they are too sick to participate. Please see the back of this handout for details. Note that in most situations, a health-care provider's note is not needed to return.

Children may also avoid school due to anxiety (symptoms may include decreased appetite, feeling tired, stomachache, headache etc). If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child.

If your child has a compromised immune system or is at high risk for complications from common illnesses, please talk to your school (school nurse if available) about developing a plan with you and your child's health-care provider to keep your child healthy and safe while attending school.


Please note: This document is not meant to take the place of local health department or school district guidance.






Reasons to keep me home from school and what needs to happen before I can return

What is my symptom?	When should I stay home and when to seek medical care?	When can I return to school?
Fever	I have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. Seek medical care if I have fever and any of the following: ear pain, sore throat, rash, stomachache, headache or tooth pain.	If I have not had a fever overnight without the use of fever-reducing medication and I am feeling better.
Vomiting and/or diarrhea	If I have vomited 2 or more times in the last 24 hours. If my stool is watery and I may not make it to the toilet in time. Seek medical care if I have stomach cramping and fever, I have bloody or black stool, or I am showing signs of dehydration (tired and sleepy, dry mouth and not urinating at least once in the last 8 hours).	If I did not vomit overnight and I am able to drink liquids without throwing up. If my diarrhea has improved.
Persistent cough or trouble breathing	Seek medical care if I have a persistent cough, difficulty breathing or trouble catching my breath or if I develop a fever with the cough. These symptoms may be signs of COVID-19 or Flu and should be evaluated by a health-care provider.	Once I am feeling better and I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider. If my symptoms were due to asthma, please make sure that I have permission to use breathing medication at school.
Rash	Seek medical care if the rash has blisters, is draining, is painful, looks like bruises and/or if I develop a fever.	Rash has healed or I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider.
Eye irritation	Seek medical care if I have eye swelling, eye pain, trouble seeing or an eye injury.	Once I am feeling better.
Sore throat	Seek medical care if I have drooling, trouble swallowing or a fever and/or rash.	Once I am feeling better. If I was prescribed an antibiotic by my health-care provider, then I can return 12 hours after the first dose, if I am without fever and I am feeling better.

If you don't know whether to send your child to school or have specific concerns regarding your child's health, contact your child's health-care provider, a local urgent care or the school nurse.








Additional Resource on Anxiety


Keep in mind that mild stomach aches or headaches can be a sign of anxiety not illness.

Take steps to address the anxiety rather than keep a child home.

Family Handout about Anxiety




Is your child missing school due to anxiety?



Definition of anxiety: Feeling of fear and uneasiness about everyday situations.

If your child is suffering from anxiety, you are not alone. The good news is that in most situations, anxiety is normal and temporary. Anxiety becomes a concern if it persists - it can impact relationships with family, peers and teachers, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance/refusal. Addressing anxiety is important for a child's overall well-being, not just attendance.

In addition, if your child starts to complain of symptoms like a headache or stomach ache, it is important to **quickly determine** if this is related to anxiety or a physical illness which might require missing school. If the challenge is anxiety, then staying home may worsen the situation.



What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Persistent anxiety can present in many ways, making it difficult to recognize. Symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, and some children may keep worries to themselves or have difficulty explaining their feelings making it hard to identify symptoms. Anxiety symptoms can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Feeling tired, irritable or easily tearful
- Having trouble separating from parents
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Trouble getting out of bed or dressed for school
- Lack of appetite
- Trouble concentrating which may lead to difficulty starting tasks, problems with homework and falling behind in school
- Physical symptoms, including stomachaches and headaches
- Avoiding activities they previously enjoyed
- Negative or continuous thoughts that something bad is going to happen



Reactions

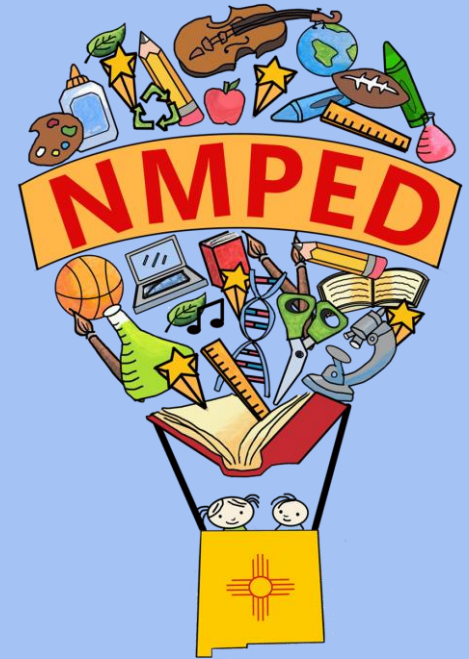
- Any questions?
- What do you think of these materials?
- Have any of your states produced something similar?
- Can you use them to share with districts or create dialogue about how to update current guidance?

Attendance Matters!



Every Student, Every School, Every Day

Showing Up Together New Mexico: Attendance Matters



Barb Armijo, NMPED Attendance Improvement Coordinator

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Campaign Highlights

Showing Up Together New Mexico: Attendance Matters.

- **Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham** proclaiming September as Attendance Awareness Month in N.M.
- Media press advisory (local media)
- Guest Editorial in the Albuquerque Journal, Santa Fe New Mexican
- **Student Voices**, videos of students telling their stories
- **Fostering a Culture of Attendance**

Showing Up Together: Fall Attendance Conference

- 400 participants from district/school attendance teams from across N.M.
- Spotlight speaker Cecelia Leong, Attendance Works
- 16 Breakout sessions designed to help teams build their AIPs.

Brief History of Attendance in NM

- Attendance for Success Act (2019)
- Replaced and repealed the Compulsory School Act
- 2023-24, \$5 million to support statewide Attendance Improvement initiatives (HB 2)



N.M. Attendance Story Now

Daunting challenges ahead.



- 2021-2022, NM statewide chronic absentee rate of 40.40%
- 2022-2023, NM statewide chronic absentee rate of 39.40%
- We are committed to lowering the rate with the help of legislative funding, district/school leaders and local communities who want to **foster a new culture of attendance**

The Act's Intent

- Prevents absences
- Provides earlier interventions for absences and chronic absenteeism
- Creates a process for prevention, intervention, support and referrals
- Describes data collection and use
- Takes a less punitive approach to improving attendance

Statewide Attendance Improvement Plans

Whole School Prevention

- Special staff
- Special programs
- Special events
- Special teams

Supporting Cast

- Community Partners
- Grants
- Incentives and Recognitions
- Before and After School Programs
- PTAs
- School Based Health Centers



Statewide Attendance Dashboard

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/safe-healthy-schools/attendance-for-success/annual-state-districts-and-schools-attendance-report>

The screenshot shows the New Mexico Public Education Department's website. The header includes the department logo and a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT US, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, FAMILIES/COMMUNITIES, and ADMINISTRATORS. The main content area is titled "ATTENDANCE FOR SUCCESS" and features a graphic of colorful hands with the text "Attendance Matters! Every Student, Every School, Every Day". A breadcrumb trail indicates the current page is under "Home / Offices and Programs / Safe & Healthy Schools / Attendance for Success". The main text discusses the issue of chronic absence, stating that more than 8 million students are missing school days, which can lead to academic risk. A yellow button labeled "ANNUAL STATE, DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE REPORT" is prominently displayed. On the right side, there is a sidebar with the "NMPED" logo and a list of navigation options: "Safe & Healthy Schools", "Athletic Equity Act", "Attendance for Success" (which is expanded to show "Annual State, Districts and Schools Attendance Report" and "United Way - SY22 Presentations"), and "United Way - SY22 Presentations".

NEW MEXICO
Public Education Department

HOME ABOUT US ▾ STUDENTS ▾ EDUCATORS ▾ FAMILIES/COMMUNITIES ▾ ADMINISTRATORS ▾

ATTENDANCE FOR SUCCESS

Home / Offices and Programs / Safe & Healthy Schools / Attendance for Success

ATTENDANCE FOR SUCCESS

Across the country, **more than 8 million students** are missing so many days of school that they are academically at risk. Chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason —excused, unexcused absences and suspensions, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects and ninth-graders dropping out of high school.

ANNUAL STATE, DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE REPORT

NM PED

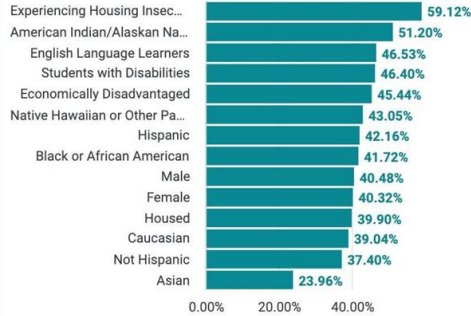
- Safe & Healthy Schools
- Athletic Equity Act
- Attendance for Success
 - Annual State, Districts and Schools Attendance Report
 - United Way - SY22 Presentations

Subgroups

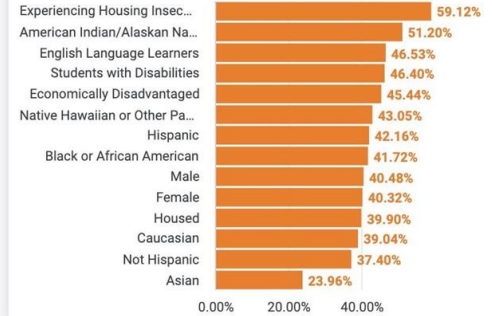
NMPED Dashboard Site



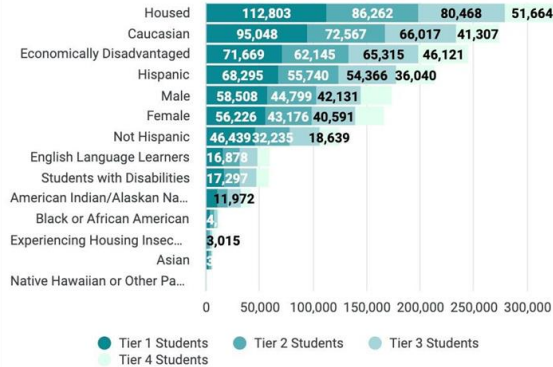
Chronic Absentee Rate - School



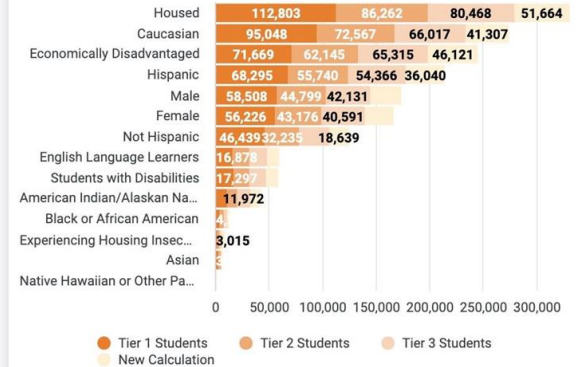
Chronic Absentee Rate - District



Students by Tier - School



Students by Tier - District



What is a Culture of Attendance?

A schoolwide understanding that attendance is an important part of the learning experience.

Includes:

- Attendance is taken in every class, every day.
- Parents know in advance what will happen if their child is out
- Students understand that attendance is important

Here is what NM is Doing to Foster a Culture of Attendance

- Outreach to families starting before the school year begins
- Leverage existing activities to communicate the importance of good attendance and offer support
- Nurture a school-wide system of attendance incentives/recognition
- Get involved in Attendance Awareness Month



New Mexico's Attendance Elevator Speech

- The Attendance for Success Act moves away from looking at truancy only to looking at ALL Absences
- Engaging classrooms, caring adults, and relationships with families help to ensure a child is in school
- All school personnel and the community at large are responsible for school attendance

Showing Up Together to Improve Attendance

Live Stream Link for Fall 2023 Statewide Attendance Conference

<https://forms.gle/xHqSSLsMbDAq4sGSA>



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STATE POLICY AND ABSENTEEISM



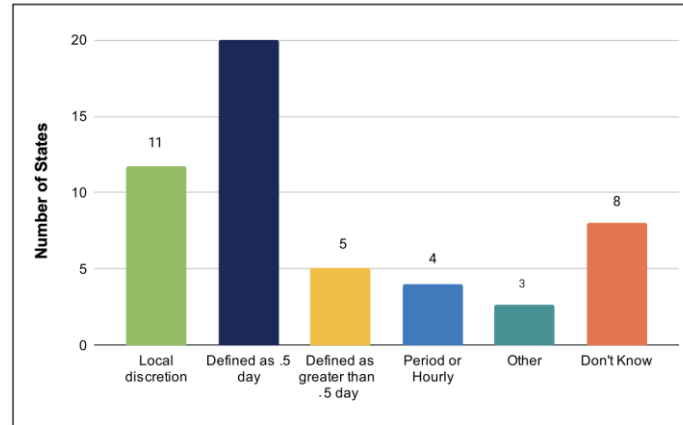
Build into accountability systems

- Every Student Succeeds Act requirement for a non-academic indicator in state accountability rubrics led [36 states](#) and [D.C.](#) to include chronic absenteeism as a metric.
- The pandemic prompted some states to waive attendance and testing in accountability rubrics but most have returned to pre-pandemic standards.

Define chronic absenteeism & its terms

- **42 states** define chronic absenteeism as missing 10% of the school year. Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey New Mexico, and Nevada are among those with legislation.
- **20 states** define an absence as missing at least 1/2 the school day, in line with the federal definition.

Figure 1: Definition of Day of Attendance for In-Person



Promote public reporting/analysis of data

- ESSA requires data to be publicly reported as part of state and local report cards, but states determine what disaggregated data to share
- Only **18 states** currently break down chronic absenteeism by grade level on their websites; **20** include homeless status.
- **California, Indiana, Illinois, New Mexico** and **Oklahoma**, among others, have legislation requiring districts to report data and make data available publicly

Require attendance teams & plans

- [Connecticut](#), [Maine](#), and [New Jersey](#) require schools with high rates of student absenteeism to set up attendance teams that analyze the data and brainstorm solutions for improving attendance
- [Nevada's](#) 2023 legislation requires an advisory board in each county to support districts on attendance.
- [Illinois](#) and [New Mexico](#) specify that districts use a multi-tiered system of supports for dealing with absenteeism.

Limit punitive approaches to truancy

- [Texas](#), which once listed truancy as a criminal offense, decriminalized it in 2015 and required districts to provide behavior improvement plans, school-based community service, or counseling referrals.
- [Ohio](#) in 2016 required districts to provide truancy intervention plans.
- [California](#) in 2020 made it harder to send truant students to juvenile court.
- [Utah's](#) 2023 bill requires juvenile services to build in evidence-based practices to reducing absenteeism

Roles for State Education Agencies

- Provide information and technical assistance on evidence-based practices, especially districts with problematic attendance rates
- Look for bright spots and share their strategies with other districts
- Disaggregate data and share publicly on report cards
- Share actionable data with LEAs, giving comparisons to similar districts with similar demographics.

Announcements



Upcoming SEAC Offerings

- Learning Series 5: Overcoming Data Challenges
 - Session 1: August 30th from 1:00-2:00 pm EDT
 - Session 2: September 6th from 1:00-2:00 pm EDT
 - Session 3: September 13th from 1:00-2:00 pm EDT
- Learning Series 6: Bonus Sessions
 - Session 1: *Strategies for SEA-LEA TA coordination*, September 12th from 1:00-2:15 pm EDT
 - Session 2: *Finding Missing Students*, September 20th from 1:00-2:00 pm EDT
 - Session 3: *Evidence-Based Practices to Support Attendance in Underserved Populations*, October 5th from 1:30-3:00 EDT
- SEAC Universal Webinar
 - September 19th from 3:00-4:15 pm EDT

Contact Information

- If you're interested in learning about upcoming SEAC sessions or connecting with our team, please contact:
 - SEAC team (for session registration)
SEACenter@insightpolicyresearch.com
 - Jarle Crocker, jcrocker@insightpolicyresearch.com
 - Megan Sambolt, msambolt@air.org

Chronic Absence Series

September,
October,
and
December



WestEd
Western Educational
Equity Assistance Center

- **Increasing Attendance and Engagement for American Indian and Alaska Native Students**
September 12, 2023 | 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m. PT
- **Increasing Attendance and Engagement for Black/African American Students**
October 11, 2023 | 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m. PT
- **Increasing Attendance and Engagement for Multilingual Learners**
December 6, 2023 | 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m. PT



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<https://weeac.wested.org/subscribe/> or scan the QR Code
below



[@WEEAC_WestEd](https://twitter.com/WEEAC_WestEd)



WEEAC@WestEd.org



Questions?





Evaluation

✓ Complete the Meeting Evaluation

https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/cklwj8q7lw9w707306xnps5vv