



PRESS RELEASE

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Huge gains in the number of states publishing chronic absence data, from one in 2010 to 49 in 2025.

Accountability for chronic absence for schools remains widespread 10 years after ESSA was signed into law.

Close to half (22) of states offer guidance on adopting a comprehensive, prevention focused approach to addressing chronic absence.

Beginning with prevention and early intervention strategies that are tailored to local realities is key to improving attendance.

Attendance Works showcases success stories from Colorado and Virginia, where state leadership is putting policies and practices in place that are making a measurable difference in ensuring students are in school.

(June 3, 2025) Attendance Works published its fifth annual report today, *More Essential Than Ever: States Taking Action to Improve Attendance*, examining the progress to date on state attendance data, policy and practice known to improve student attendance and outcomes. The 2025 report is based on an examination of websites for all 50 states and Washington, D.C., as well as a survey completed by 49 states and D.C. in the spring of 2025. This year's summary focuses on:

- Making data available in a more timely manner
- Continuing to promote accountability for chronic absence
- Ensuring that states are leading with prevention



Hedy Chang, founder and executive director of Attendance Works said, “States are expected to have even more autonomy in education than they have had in decades. This brief offers examples of policies and practices states can put in place now to support educators, schools and districts struggling to address the ongoing student absenteeism challenge.”

This year's report identifies twelve key takeaways that show significant momentum. Report highlights include:

- **All states but one publish chronic absence data on their department of education website.** When Attendance Works was founded in 2010, only one state, Maryland, had a metric showing students missing substantial amounts of school for any reason, and published this data on its website. Now, in 2025, chronic absence data can be found on the websites of *all states* with the exception of New Hampshire.
- **The majority of states (43) have improved the release of chronic absence data and are publishing it in a transparent and timely manner.** As of mid-April 2025, 43 states published their chronic absence data for 2023-24. As a comparison, in 2022 only 25 states had published prior year chronic absence data by early April, and in 2021, only nine states had made it available. Knowing whether chronic absence is improving or worsening — and for how many and which schools, districts, grades and student groups — is critical for developing meaningful plans to improve attendance and educational outcomes.
- **While states are generally publishing a comprehensive set of chronic absence data, more should be making data available by grade is much less available.** Most states provide chronic absence data by district, school, grade level (e.g., elementary, middle, high and K-12) and specific student groups. Data by grade, however, is much less available, which can make it difficult to detect when chronic absence is elevated for particular grades, as is often the case for kindergarten, 6th, 9th and 12th grade.
- **Twenty states have set a measurable target for chronic absence.** Whether or not states adopt chronic absence as an accountability metric under Every Student Succeeds Act, they can hold themselves accountable by setting a measurable target for reducing chronic absence and using data to engage in continuous improvement. Sixteen of these states (AL, AR, CA, CO, CT, DC, IA, OH, MD, NE, NM, NV, RI, WA, WV, VA) are participating in The [50% challenge](#) to reduce chronic absence.



- **Close to half (22) of states offer guidance on adopting a comprehensive, prevention focused approach to address chronic absence.** Beginning with prevention oriented approaches and early intervention strategies, tailored to local realities, is key to improving attendance. Attendance Works recommends a [multi-tiered system of support](#) approach to improving attendance.
- **States are key players in promoting a prevention oriented approach to reducing chronic absence.** New legislation, passed with the strong support of Sen. John F. Kennedy (R), president pro tempore of the Georgia State Senate, implements significant reforms to the state's approach, including defining chronic absence and establishing attendance review teams in schools with a 10% chronic absence rate.

Attendance Works' Chang said, "State leadership to reduce chronic absence is crucial to ensure that all schools and districts not just a few innovators, have the tools and skills to support excellent attendance. State level actions designed to enhance data comparability, emphasize taking a team approach and encourage a multi-tiered system of support are essential for achieving meaningful reductions in chronic absence."

The report highlights four priorities for states in the coming years:

1. Standardize definitions across states to ensure data is useful and comparable, and how absences, attendance and enrollment thresholds are defined.
2. Investment in real-time data and grade-level insights. Only 17 states currently provide data by individual grade, making it possible to track transition years like kindergarten, 6th and 9th grade when chronic absence soars.
3. Publishing dashboards and timely reports to help everyone – families, students, educators, businesses and community partners, as well as local and state policy makers – understand absenteeism data and turn it into actionable next steps to keep the community engaged.
4. States should promote prevention by using a multi-tiered support system, using truancy courts as a last resort, not a default tool.

About Attendance Works

Attendance Works (www.attendanceworks.org) is a national nonprofit initiative that advances success in school and beyond for all students by inspiring and catalyzing policies and practices that prevent and reduce chronic absence. Its website offers a wide array of free materials, tools, research and success stories to help schools, districts and communities work together to reduce chronic absence.

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