

State Highlights Need for Regular Attendance; Works to Reduce Chronic Absence

Data and report shine a light on attendance, stress link between attendance and outcomes

(Salem, Ore) – The Oregon Department of Education today released data on K-12 attendance which highlights the high rates of chronic absenteeism in many schools and districts. Statewide, one in six students missed at least 10 percent of their enrolled school days last year – the definition of chronic absence – and for some student groups that number was even higher. A state research brief highlights the high correlation between attendance, absenteeism, and student outcomes.

Today’s report is designed to bring additional attention to the critical role attendance plays in student learning and student success. While some data on regular attendance and chronic absence is included in [school and district report cards](#), this new report represents an unprecedented amount of data on student attendance including data at the district, school, grade, and student group level as well as analysis of statewide trends and sharing of best practice strategies to boost attendance.

“Our districts and teachers invested in raising standards, improving instruction, and better supporting student learning; however, chronic absenteeism denies students access to the opportunities that will help close gaps and increase student achievement,” Deputy Superintendent Salam Noor said. “We know that by increasing student attendance – starting in kindergarten – we can improve student outcomes and graduation rates. With the efforts underway, and continued focus on this critical issue, we can and will see improvement.”

Today’s release includes [data](#) by district, school, student group, and grade as well as a [research brief](#) examining statewide trends and highlighting best practices for boosting attendance rates.

What the Data Tells Us

- Overall, 83 percent of students attended at least 90 percent of school days, meaning 1 in 6 students was chronically absent, missing over 10 percent of their enrolled school days
- Historically underserved student groups – including students of color and those navigating poverty - had slightly lower rates of regular attendance
- English learners had higher attendance rates than the state overall, with a regular attendance rate of 85 percent
- Students with regular attendance are more likely to do well in school and graduate on time
- Among students in the 12th grade, those with attendance rates of 90 percent or above had a graduation rate of 91 percent. For those with attendance rates below 90 percent, the rate was 75 percent

“With more detailed information now publicly available about student attendance, Oregon’s policymakers and educators will know where to focus their efforts to help Oregon students maintain good attendance habits and go on to reach their full potential,” said Swati Adarkar, President and CEO of the Children’s Institute.

Combatting Chronic Absenteeism

The state is engaged in multiple efforts to learn more about the causes of chronic absence and is working with local schools, communities, and families to reduce the number of days students miss from school.

Efforts underway include:

- Promoting best practices such as welcoming students by name, providing breakfast after the bell, celebrating good attendance, calling home when a student does not make it to school, and working with community partners to create a culture of regular attendance. Additional strategies can be found in our [research brief](#) or at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/>
- Partnering with the Public Health Division, the Chief Education Office, and community based organizations to identify root causes and solutions to chronic absenteeism
- Providing professional development and training materials to school districts on conducting Attendance Audits so they can address chronic absenteeism in their schools
- Participating in the [Network to Advance State Attendance Policy and Practice \(NASAPP\)](#) to work with and learn from other states and partners engaged in this work
- Partnering with the Public Health Division to improve student health and remove health related barriers to attendance
- Focusing on establishing early patterns of regular attendance

Today's report looks at the percent of students who were attending school regularly (students who were not chronically absent) in the 2014-15 school year.

- For state-level data by student group and grade, [click here](#).
- For data by district, school, student group, and grade, [click here](#).
- For the state research brief on chronic attendance, [click here](#).

While state-level chronic absence data has been available since the 2012-13 school year, it is important to note that due to data collection and submission issues reported by several large districts, the 2013-14 state-level data is unreliable and should not be used for comparative purposes. To look at how attendance rates compare from 2012-13 to 2014-15, [click here](#).