STUDENT ATTENDANCE

September is National Attendance Awareness Month

COLORADO
Department of Education

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

School is back in session! School leaders, faculty and staff are welcoming students and their families and planning for a successful school year. A first step in getting this school year off to a positive start is creating awareness and understanding of the importance of daily attendance.

REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS

- Missing only two days a month can set students behind in their education.

- Often students who miss seven to nine days per semester, (or 10 percent or more of days) face serious hurdles in getting to school, such as ongoing health concerns, lack of a safe path to school or bullying.

- Irregular attendance can be a better predictor of whether students will drop out before graduation than test scores.

- Research links school attendance to *student engagement*, which refers to a student's sense of belonging, safety and involvement in school and plays a role in academic achievement.

COLORADO ATTENDANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Take a closer look at Colorado's performance in attendance!

- Districts annually report on incidence of attendance and truancy. In the future, additional data will be available on chronic absenteeism, which includes a count of students who miss 10 percent of the school days in which they were enrolled in the school, regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.

- "Habitually truant" count pertains to the number of students of compulsory school attendance age (6 through 16) who have had four unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in one school year.

- Colorado has seen an alarming increase in the number of habitual truant students since 2013-14.

Best Practices for Increasing Attendance

There are a variety of approaches that support the regular school attendance rate. Click on a link to read more about them.

- **Focus on the ninth-grade**
  Improvements in long-term outcomes come from focusing on students' ninth-grade year.

- **Focus on middle school**
  Students' middle school attendance rate and GPA are the best indicators to determine high school success.

- **Parent engagement**
  Engaging parents in their child's educational career is a key strategy in improving attendance and academic performance.

- **School-based health centers**
  School-based health centers and interventions have a direct impact on educational outcomes, like attendance.

State Attendance Rate
- **2013-14 - 93.6%**
- **2014-15 - 93.2%**
- **2015-16 - 93.3%**
- **2016-17 - 92.9%**

Represents incidences

State Truancy Rates
- **2013-14 - 2.2%**
- **2014-15 - 2.4%**
- **2015-16 - 2.5%**
- **2016-17 - 2.7%**

Represents incidences of truancy

Habitual Truant Count
- **2013-14 -   88,991**
- **2014-15 - 111,200**
- **2015-16 - 106,362**
- **2016-17 -   115,054**

Represents students

ATTENDANCE TOOLKITS

Free resources provided by Attendance Works that are available to school and district leaders to improve student attendance and student outcomes.

Afterschool Providers
- Tools for Out of School Time or Afterschool Programs
  Research shows that quality afterschool programs not only contribute to academic performance but they also influence school-day attendance by engaging community partners, families and students themselves. The sense of belonging, the connection to caring adults and the academic enrichment that are often provided through afterschool programming help encourage regular and consistent school attendance.

District Leaders
- The Power of Positive Connections Toolkit
  A step-by-step approach to establishing a team and culture promoting regular attendance, identifying at-risk students, and crunching data to understand scope of the problem.
- Attendance Tracking Tools
  These are free tools to track chronic absences developed by Applied Survey Research to develop self-calculating spreadsheets for school districts (especially useful for small districts).

Principals
- Leading Attendance: A Toolkit for Principals
  This toolkit provides templates, tools, and messaging for school leaders, as well as examples of schools across the nation that have improved their attendance rates.

Teachers
- Teaching Attendance: Everyday strategies to help teachers increase achievement
  The toolkit provides teachers with strategies to establish culture of attendance and engage parents and students.

Where can I learn more?

- Colorado School Attendance Reporting: https://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/schooldisciplineattendance
- State of Colorado Truancy Data: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/truancystatistics
- Attendance Policies and Practices Review: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention
- View all CDE fact sheets: www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs