



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance matters! Daily attendance and engagement in learning is essential to student success at all grade levels. Colorado law directly connected to attendance focuses on compulsory school attendance, truancy and school finance. Important student attendance definition of rates and terms include:

Truancy: Truancy is defined as an unexcused absence. The rate is calculated by dividing the reported Total Student Days Unexcused Absences by the Total Student Days Possible.

Habitually Truant (Student Count): A student is counted as habitually truant if the student has four unexcused absences in one month and/or 10 absences in one school year.

Chronically Absent: A student absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled during the school year is chronically absent. All absences are included – unexcused, excused and suspensions. The rate is the percentage of students enrolled who are chronically absent

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM:

Attendance is important at all levels within the K-12 education system. For preschool, students with good attendance develop skills and good attendance habits to prepare for kindergarten. By third grade, children who missed too much of kindergarten and 1st grade fall behind in reading. Chronic absenteeism in middle school is a warning sign that students are on a path to disengagement and dropping out. In ninth grade, attendance is a clear predictor, more than test scores that a student will leave before completing high school.

Improving school attendance and addressing chronic absenteeism aligns with Colorado Department of Education (CDE) mission and [strategic plan](#). In Colorado in 2021-22, 1 in 3 students was chronically absent.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA):

As part of Colorado's state ESSA plan, chronic absenteeism rates are collected as part of the CDE School Discipline and Attendance data submission. The submission includes the reporting of the number of chronically absent students by school, overall and disaggregated by ethnicity/race, gender, special education, English language learner status, homeless status and free-and-reduced lunch status. To learn more about ESSA in Colorado, please [click here](#).

Colorado Attendance Law

School Attendance Act – Residence of child (§22-1-102, C.R.S.)

- Every public school shall be open for the admission of all children, between the ages of five and twenty-one years, residing in that district without the payment of tuition.

School Attendance Act – Compulsory School Attendance (§22-33-104, C.R.S.)

- Requires that each child between the ages of six and 17 shall attend public school unless otherwise excused.

Standardizing Truancy Reporting and Expanding the Resources (§22-33-104, C.R.S.)

- Requires the Colorado State Board of Education to adopt guidelines for the standardized calculation of unexcused absences of students from school.

School Attendance Law of 1963 - Truancy Court (§19-1-104, C.R.S.)

- Allows a criminal justice agency investigating a matter under the "School Attendance Law of 1963" to seek, prior to adjudication, disciplinary and truancy information from the juvenile's school.

Truancy enforcement (§22-33-107, C.R.S.)

- Requires school district to have policy for a truancy plan with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school.

FINANCE ACT OF 1994 (§22-54-103, C.R.S.)

- "Pupil enrollment" means the number of pupils enrolled on the pupil enrollment count day within the applicable budget year, as evidenced by the actual attendance of such pupils prior to said date.



COLORADO ATTENDANCE DATA:

Colorado collects and reports on attendance data in four main categories at the school, district and state level: attendance rate, truancy, habitually truant, and chronic absenteeism (at the district and state level only). See how your school or district compares to state data on the [Attendance Information webpage](#).

	State Attendance Rate	State Truancy Rates	Habitual Truant Count	Chronic Absence
2017-2018	92.5%	2.8%	117,109	24.3%
2018-2019	92.3%	3%	140,360	22.5%
2019-2020*	92.8%	2.7%	53,584	22.6%
2020-2021	91.9%	5.2%	138,423	26.0%
2021-2022	90.2%	3.6%	96,679	35.5%

*Attendance data was collected August 2019 – March 2020

STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Regular school attendance matters! There are a variety of research-based approaches that support regular school attendance. CDE has developed a Dropout Prevention Framework to help organize resources. A few resources currently used to support improved attendance are listed below.

Early Warning Systems:

Early Warning Systems combine predictive student data with student support structures to keep students engaged and achieving in school. Early warning systems often use the ABC framework (attendance, behavior and course performance) when examining data.

- [Sample data tool for attendance](#)
- [Sample 3 Tiers of Intervention for attendance](#)

Family and Community Engagement:

Relationships with families are strengthened when schools work closely with families to communicate the importance of attendance. These relationships have been shown to improve attendance, lower dropout rates and improve attitudes towards school.

- CDE toolkit for establishing a [family and community partnership](#)
- [Promising practice overview for home visits](#)
- CDE guidance on conducting [workshops](#) for families on attendance
- [Community engagement resources](#)

School-based health centers:

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

- [Sample guidance on developing partnerships with community health partners](#)
- [CDE Model for Healthy Schools](#)

References and Materials:

[Dropout Prevention Best Practice Guide References](#)

[Dropout Prevention Resources](#)

[Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement office](#)