

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE

September is National Attendance Awareness Month



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE:

Attendance matters! As school is back in session, it is important to have a strong understanding of how daily attendance is essential to student success at all grade levels. In alignment with legislation, policies that guide Colorado attendance focus on compulsory school attendance, truancy and school finance. Important student attendance definition of rates and terms include:

**Truancy Rate:** Calculated at the school level by dividing the reported Total Student Days Unexcused Absences by the Total Student Days Possible

**Habitual 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.

**Chronic Absenteeism Rate:** Students absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled in the public school year during the school year. All absences are included – unexcused, excused and suspensions.

## CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM:

Improving school attendance and addressing chronic absenteeism aligns with Colorado Department of Education (CDE) mission and [strategic plan](#) to support every student, every step of the way. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year approximately 18 days a year, or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism data can be used along with positive and community based strategies to improve student outcomes. In Colorado, 1 in 5 students are chronically absent.

Attendance is important at all levels including preschool. Preschool students with good attendance develop good skills and habits to prepare for kindergarten. By third grade, children who missed too much of kindergarten and first grade will fall behind in reading. Chronic absenteeism in middle school is a warning sign that students are in a path to dropping out. In ninth grade, attendance is a better predictor than test scores that a student will leave before completing high school.

## EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA):

According to the state's ESSA plan, chronic absenteeism rates are collected as part of the CDE School Discipline and Attendance data submission. The submission includes reporting the number of chronically absent students by school, overall and disaggregated by ethnicity/race, gender, special education, English language learner status and homeless status. Starting with the 2018 data submission, the addition of free-and-reduced lunch status will be requested from schools/districts. The definition CDE provided to school districts regarding chronic absenteeism is: "the unduplicated count of students absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled in the public school during the school year." 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:

Districts annually report on incidence of attendance and truancy. Chronic absenteeism rate is also available. 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
<b>2015-16</b>	93.3%	2.5%	106,362	N/A
<b>2016-17</b>	92.9%	2.7%	115,054	18.6%
<b>2017-18</b>	92.5%	2.8%	117,109	24.3%

## STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Regular school attendance matters! There are a variety of research-based approaches that support regular school attendance. For more information and strategies, please contact the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement.

### **Early Warning Systems:**

An effective way to ensure that all students attend school is to create an early warning system that tracks student attendance, behavior and course performance (ABCs).

- Review the [data](#)
- [3 Tiers of Intervention](#)

### **Family and Community Engagement:**

Relationships with families are strengthened when schools work closely with [families](#) to communicate the importance of attendance, which has been shown to improve attendance, lower dropout rates and improve attitudes towards school.

- Establish a [family and community partnership](#)
- [Home visits](#)
- Conducting [workshops](#) for families on attendance
- [Community engagement](#)

### **School-based health centers:**

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

- Partnerships with [community health partners](#)
- [Healthy Schools](#)

## Where can I learn more?

- [Attendance Works](#)
- [Early Warning Signs Fact Sheet](#)
- [Colorado School Attendance Reporting](#)
- [State of Colorado Truancy Data](#)
- [Attendance Policies and Practices Review](#)
- [View all CDE fact sheets](#)