

# Attendance Matters: Alabama's Call to Action!

Presented by:

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Alabama State Department of Education

Instructional Services Section




# Turn and Talk

Think about a situation when lack of attendance impacted your life.




# Highlights of Presentation

**What Chronic Absenteeism is**, why it matters, and its scale and scope.



**What evidence and experience reflect** to reduce chronic absenteeism with access to tools that can help.



**How school districts and communities can engage** in a comprehensive approach to combat chronic absenteeism and increase student success.



# Unpacking Attendance Terms

## Average Daily Attendance

- **How many students show up to school every day?** The % of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.

## Truancy

- **Who is missing school without permission?** Typically refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state under No Child Left Behind. It signals the potential need for legal intervention under state compulsory education laws.

## Chronic Absence

- **Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk?** Broadly means missing too much school for any reason – excused, unexcused, etc. Researchers commonly define it as missing 10% of school.

# Evidence is Clear-Chronic Absenteeism Undercuts School Improvement Efforts

- **Decreases impact of Pre-K and K on school readiness.**
- **Decreases third grade reading performance.**
- **Decreases eighth grade math performance.**
- **Decreases high school graduation rates.**
- **Decreases college and career readiness.**

# Chronic Early Absences Connected to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading



**A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:**

- Scored 20% lower in reading and math in later grades and gap grows
- 2x as likely to be retained in grade
- 2x likely to be suspended by the end of 7th grade
- Likely to continue being chronically absent

# Attendance Does Matter!

This chart shows the correlation between the number of student absences for a ninth-grade student and the projected percentage for those students graduating on time.

This data was compiled by the Johns Hopkins University, Everyone Graduates Center through a national study.

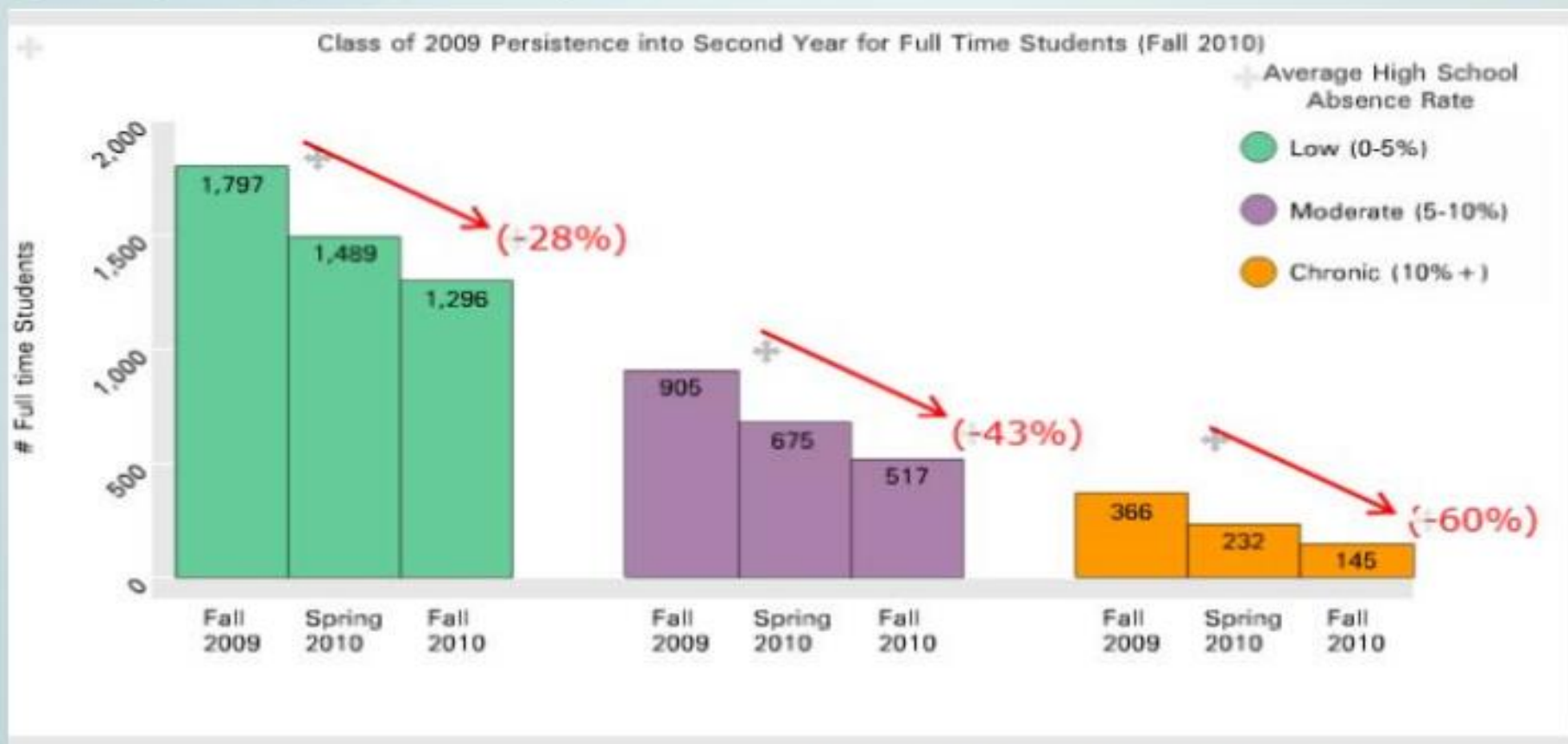
ABSENCES	CHANCE OF GRADUATING ON TIME
0-4	87%
5-9	63%
10-14	41%
15-19	21%
20-24	9%
25-29	5%
30-34	2%
35-40	1%

**\*Source: Everyone Graduates Center,  
Johns Hopkins University**



# Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Participation

***In Rhode Island, only 11% of chronically absent high school students persisted into a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of college vs. 51% of those with low absences.***





# Chronic Absenteeism can be an Entry Point for Justice-Involved Youth



# Attendance Initiatives Timeline

- 2007-Dropout Research, Identifies attendance as a major indicator
- 2008-2009- Design the Graduation Tracking Early Warning System
- 2008-2011- Graduation Coaches, focus on attendance, academics, and behaviors grades 9-12
- 2009-Updated compulsory attendance age between ages 6-17
- 2012- Johns Hopkins University, Everyone a Graduate Center research center with promotion coaches
- 2015- Attendance becomes a federal data point as chronic absenteeism
- 2016-2017- Chronic Absenteeism is first reported as an accountability indicator on LEA Report Card
- 2015-2018- Collaborative partnerships with national agencies such as Attendance Works and other states
- 2016-present- The Alabama Attendance Manual
- 2017-2019- Attendance Matter Summits
- 2018-present- August and September Attendance Awareness Campaign
- 2019-present- Monthly virtual Attendance Officers “Chat and Chew”
- 2021-present- Retooling the Code of Conduct



# The Good News

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- Reducing Absenteeism is Achievable, and its Impact is Reversible
- Modest Investment Can Bring Large Returns
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism is a **POWERFUL** and **UNTAPPED** lever for increasing success in school improvement.



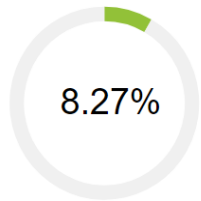


# Attendance Matters in Alabama:

## Chronic Absenteeism 2021-2023

### Chronic Absenteeism- 2021

#### Chronic Absenteeism

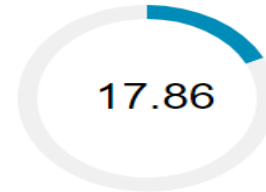


Subpopulations

American Indian/Alaska Native	9.79%
Asian	2.03%
Black or African American	8.96%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11.34%
White	7.95%
Two or more races	8.67%
Hispanic/Latino	8.40%
Students with Limited English Proficiency	7.01%
Students with Disabilities	11.06%
Economically Disadvantaged	11.19%

### Chronic Absenteeism-2022

#### Chronic Absenteeism

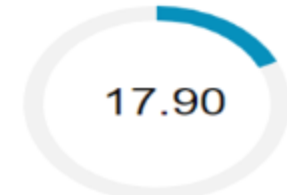


Subpopulations

American Indian/Alaska Native	17.66
Asian	6.83
Black or African American	22.28
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	19.01
White	15.73
Two or more races	18.52
Hispanic/Latino	15.93
Students with Limited English Proficiency	13.81
Students with Disabilities	21.92
Economically Disadvantaged	24.06

### Chronic Absenteeism- 2023

#### Chronic Absenteeism



Subpopulations

American Indian/Alaska Native	18.30
Asian	6.72
Black or African American	21.30
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	20.23
White	16.53
Two or more races	19.67
Hispanic/Latino	15.13
Students with Limited English Proficiency	12.94
Students with Disabilities	22.27
Economically Disadvantaged	22.07



# Taking a Deep Dive into Data



Reports & Data	
Educator Data	▼
Financial Reports	▼
School Data	▲
Federal Report Card	
State Report Card	
Federal Glossary of Terms	
State Glossary of Terms	
Teacher Attendance	
Business Rules	
School Performance	▼
Student Data	▼
Supporting Data	

## Reports & Data



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<https://statereportcard.alsde.edu/selectschool.aspx>



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## Alabama State Department of Education Report Card

### SELECT A SCHOOL

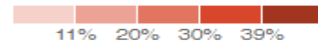
Year	
2022-2023	▼
System	
Alabama State Department of Education	▼
School	
Alabama State Department of Education	▼

Go

# Chronic Absenteeism Rates by State

## Chronic absenteeism rates by state

Percentage of students who have missed 10% or more of a school year. Chronic absenteeism is much higher than before the pandemic, but rates have fallen slightly from 2022 to 2023.



STATE	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Alabama	18%	18%	8%	9%	11%	18%	18%
Alaska	43%	46%	22%	17%	28%	26%	24%
Arizona	n/a	27%	16%	23%	19%	19%	n/a
Arkansas	n/a	48%	25%	16%	25%	25%	n/a
California	25%	30%	14%	n/a	13%	12%	11%
Colorado	31%	35%	26%	23%	23%	24%	19%
Connecticut	20%	24%	19%	12%	10%	11%	n/a
Delaware	20%	20%	18%	17%	11%	11%	11%
District of Columbia	44%	48%	31%	29%	33%	29%	n/a
Florida	31%	32%	25%	17%	20%	20%	n/a
Georgia	23%	25%	21%	9%	13%	13%	n/a
Hawaii	30%	37%	18%	12%	19%	19%	n/a
Idaho	18%	21%	16%	8%	3%	3%	n/a
Illinois	28%	30%	21%	11%	18%	17%	n/a
Indiana	21%	23%	20%	11%	12%	12%	10%
Iowa	21%	26%	21%	17%	12%	11%	n/a
Kansas	23%	26%	18%	14%	14%	14%	n/a
Kentucky	24%	28%	22%	12%	18%	18%	n/a
Louisiana	22%	18%	25%	11%	16%	16%	n/a
Maine	26%	30%	21%	18%	17%	16%	16%

[+ SHOW 31 MORE](#)

### Notes

At the time of publishing this graphic, states listed as "n/a" did not have available data for that school year.

Source: Nat Malkus, Ed.gov, and Return to Learn Tracker, "Chronic Absenteeism: 2017–2023," American Enterprise Institute, January 2024.

Credit: LA Johnson/NPR



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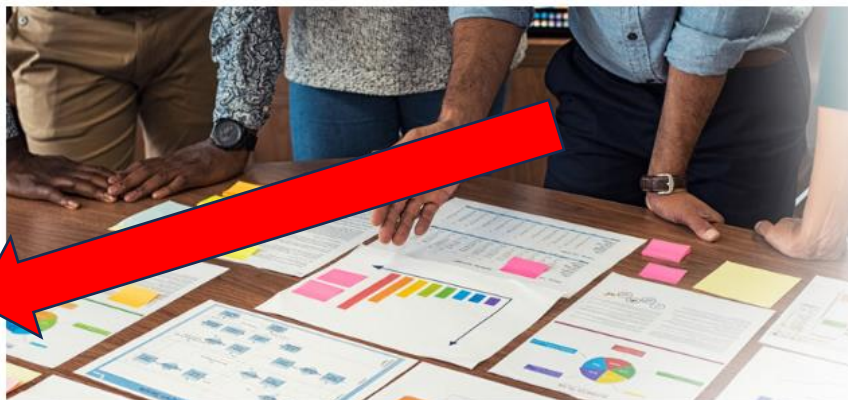
School Performance ▲

Student Absenteeism

Student Data ▾

Supporting Data

## Reports & Data



[Home](#) » [Reports & Data](#)

# Accessing Chronic Absentee Data

[https://reportcard.alsde.edu/SupportingData\\_Alsde.aspx](https://reportcard.alsde.edu/SupportingData_Alsde.aspx)

Reports and Data> Supporting Data>  
Accountability Indicators



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (REPORT CARD)

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ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

STUDENT PARTICIPATION & PROFICIENCY

STUDENT CCR & GRADUATION RATE

EDUCATOR CREDENTIALS

EDUCATOR DEMOGRAPHICS

EDUCATOR EXPERIENCE

EDUCATOR - IN FIELD & OUT OF FIELD

EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

\* Indicates the number of students was  $\leq 10$  Or total number of students minus the number of students in the subgroup was  $\leq 10$

~ Indicates the student percentage was  $\geq 95\%$  or  $\leq 5\%$

**Note:** Some data on this screen can only be exported to a CSV file format due to the large size of the data files.

Reporting Year

2022-2023

### ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS

Choose fields

Export to XLSX

Export to CSV

#	Year	System	School	Indicator	Grade	Gender	Race	Ethnicity	Sub Population	Score
Clear		Alabama State								
	2023	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama State Department of Education	Academic Achievement	All Grades	All Gender	All Race	All Ethnicity	All SubPopulation	61.75
	2023	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama State Department of Education	Academic Growth	All Grades	All Gender	All Race	All Ethnicity	All SubPopulation	97.25
	2023	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama State Department of Education	Graduation Rate	All Grades	All Gender	All Race	All Ethnicity	All SubPopulation	88.21
	2023	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama State Department of Education	College and Career Readiness	All Grades	All Gender	All Race	All Ethnicity	All SubPopulation	79.07
	2023	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama State Department of Education	Chronic Absenteeism	All Grades	All Gender	All Race	All Ethnicity	All SubPopulation	17.90
		Alabama State	Alabama State	Progress in English						

# Teacher Attendance

Reports and Data> School Data> Teacher Attendance



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Teacher Attendance
Business Rules
School Performance ▾
Student Data ▾
Supporting Data

## Teacher Attendance

School Year 2022 - 23

Example Instruction Days : (Changes by school district)  
Total Teacher Units : 421  
Instructional Days : 77287 (421 teachers units x 187 contract days)

Other: A leave type that includes Jury Duty, Military Leave, etc.

School Name	Personal	Professional	Sick	Other	Total	Teacher Units	Instruction Days ▲	Board District
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County / City / School

🔍 Search

- ▾ ☐ Alabaster City
- ▾ ☐ Albertville City
- ▾ ☐ Alexander City
- ▾ ☐ Andalusia City
- ▾ ☐ Anniston City
- ▾ ☐ Arab City
- ▾ ☐ Athens City
- ▾ ☐ Attalla City
- ▾ ☐ Auburn City
- ▾ ☐ Autauga County
- ▾ ☐ Baldwin County



Search





# Student Absenteeism

Reports and Data> School Performance> Student Absenteeism

**Student Absenteeism**

School Year: 2021-2022

System: 000; All School Systems

School: 0000; All Schools

School Code	School Name
0000	All Schools

Export to Excel

Ex

**Student Absenteeism Data**

Academic Year	System Code <small>Δ</small>	System Name	School Code <small>Δ</small>	School Name	School Days	K12		Date Generated
						Attended Days	Absence Days	
2022	000	State of Alabama	0000	All Schools	0	119187985	8589250	10/3/2023

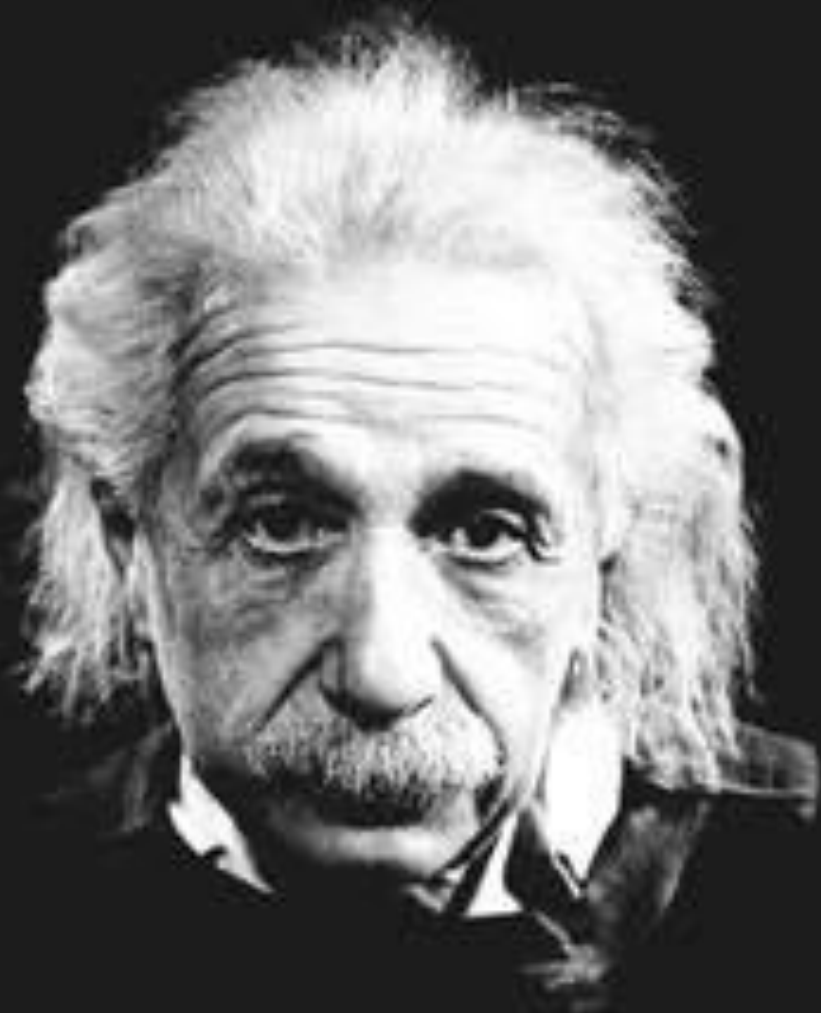
# How Big of a Problem is Chronic Absenteeism?

- Affects approximately **1 out of 4**, or 15 million students nationwide during 2022-2023.
- Affects 1 out of 3 students in some communities.
- Affects the youngest students as well as those in middle and high school.



**"Not everything that  
counts can be counted,  
and not everything that  
can be counted counts."**

-Albert Einstein



# What Contributes to Chronic Absences?

## Myths

Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused

OK to miss a day here or there

Attendance only matters in later grades

PreK and K is seen as day care not learning

## Barriers

Chronic disease (asthma) or lack of health/dental care

Caring for siblings or other family members

Unmet basic needs: transp., housing, food clothes, etc.

Trauma

No safe path to school

High suspension rates

## Aversion

Academic struggles

Being teased or bullied

Poor school climate, disproportionate school discipline, or unsafe school

Parents had negative school experience

## Disengagement

Lack of engaging and relevant instruction

No meaningful relationships with adults in school

More exciting to be with peers out of school vs. in school



# Reducing Chronic Absenteeism with:

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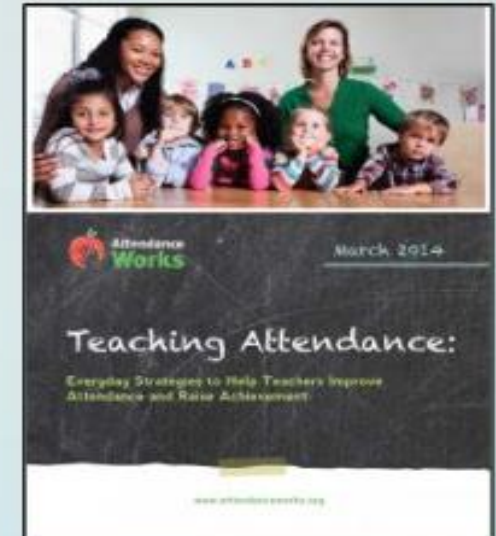
- A School Success and Student/Parent Support Model
- An Evidence-Based approach that provides a universal framework that can be flexibly adapted to meet different scales, circumstances, and intensities of student need
- A combination data analytics with the new applications of existing school and community resource (people, time and money to drive impact)



# Creating a Positive, Engaging School Climate that Explicitly Supports Attendance

## Attendance is higher when schools:

- **Promote a sense of belonging and connection** including noticing when students show up.
- **Make learning engaging** and center school discipline around restorative practice not punishment.
- **Help our most economically challenged families** and students meet their basic needs so all have the opportunity to get to school.
- **Build awareness among students and parents** about how absences can easily add up to too much time lost in the classroom.
- **Provide parents with on-going information** about their child's absences in supportive and positive manner.
- **Stop engaging in school practices** that discourage attendance.



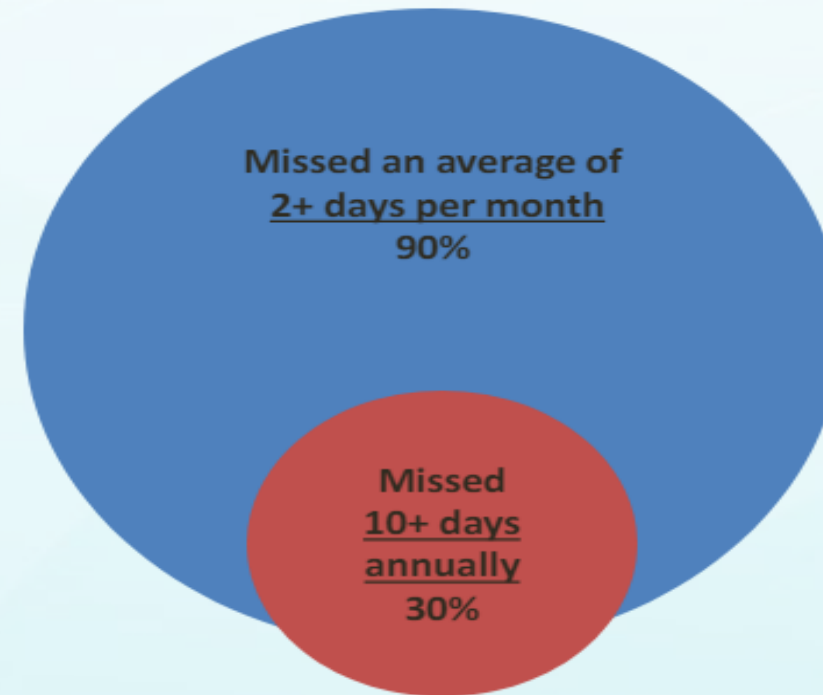
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/teaching-attendance-toolkit/>

# Parents Underestimate the Number of Year-End Absences

We asked each parent about his or her child's absences in two ways:

1. Was your child absent an average of 2 or more days a month?
2. Was your child absent more than 10 days over the year?

60% of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, but not 10+ days a year



**The math: If a child is absent an average of 2+ days a month, then she is absent far more than 10+ days a year**



# Schools Inadvertently Reinforce Some Absence-Causing Beliefs

## School Behaviors that...

### Reinforce Attendance

Class rewards for good attendance (e.g. popcorn or ice cream parties)

Individual recognition for students with good attendance

Big motivators for kids, but not parents

### Reinforce Absenteeism

- Impersonal letters
- Teachers send work home in response to absences
- Teachers do not address absenteeism issue with the parent
- Parents do not feel their child is safe in school
- High levels of absenteeism in the class

Reinforce parents' existing attitudes and behaviors toward absences

#### Impersonal Letters:

- Easy to disregard
- Many parents felt the school miscounted—but parents couldn't verify because they weren't tracking absences
- Many parents felt that the school didn't understand them

#### Sending Work Home:

- Parents thought that completing a makeup packet caught their child up for the missed day's work

#### Teachers Not Addressing Absenteeism:

- Most parents reported that they regularly communicate with their children's teacher, but never about absences



# Every Child Every Day Every Chance

- How can LEAs, ALSDE and communities take a comprehensive approach?



# Step 1: Measure and Analyze

- School District/State should **measure and publish** school-level chronic absenteeism rates.
- Schools with high rates should **track on weekly basis**.
- **Determine how many students are not attending** because of barriers, avoidance, and disengagement. Use student surveys, focus groups, and attendance census days (i.e. on a given day establish reason for every absence).

# Step 2: Monitor

- **Facilitate the spread of early warning systems** at state and school district level.
- Schools with high levels of chronic absenteeism should **use early warning systems and monitor weekly.**
- **Identify students with history** of chronic absenteeism for close monitoring and rapid action at start of year.
- Also **pay attention to students with no history** of chronic absenteeism who suddenly start to trend toward it.



# Step 3: Act

- **Create welcoming environment in schools** and send message to students that they are wanted in school everyday and that everyday matters.
- **Implement a multi-tiered response** that combines prevention, with additional supports targeted at groups of students, and case-managed assistance for highest needs students.
- In highly impacted schools **principals should lead weekly student success meetings** to understand attendance trends and analyze success of interventions at school and individual levels.
- **Establish success mentors/advocates/coaches** who can form supportive relationships with chronically absent students to help solve their problems or change their behavior and monitor their attendance on a weekly basis.
- **Make implementing a comprehensive plan** combating absenteeism a part of required activities in school improvement efforts.
- **Establish inter-agency efforts** at state and local levels led by governors and mayors.



# A Call to ACTION!

## Goal

Reduce chronic absenteeism by 5% across the state.



# Alabama Attendance Manual

## ALABAMA ATTENDANCE MANUAL

2023-2024

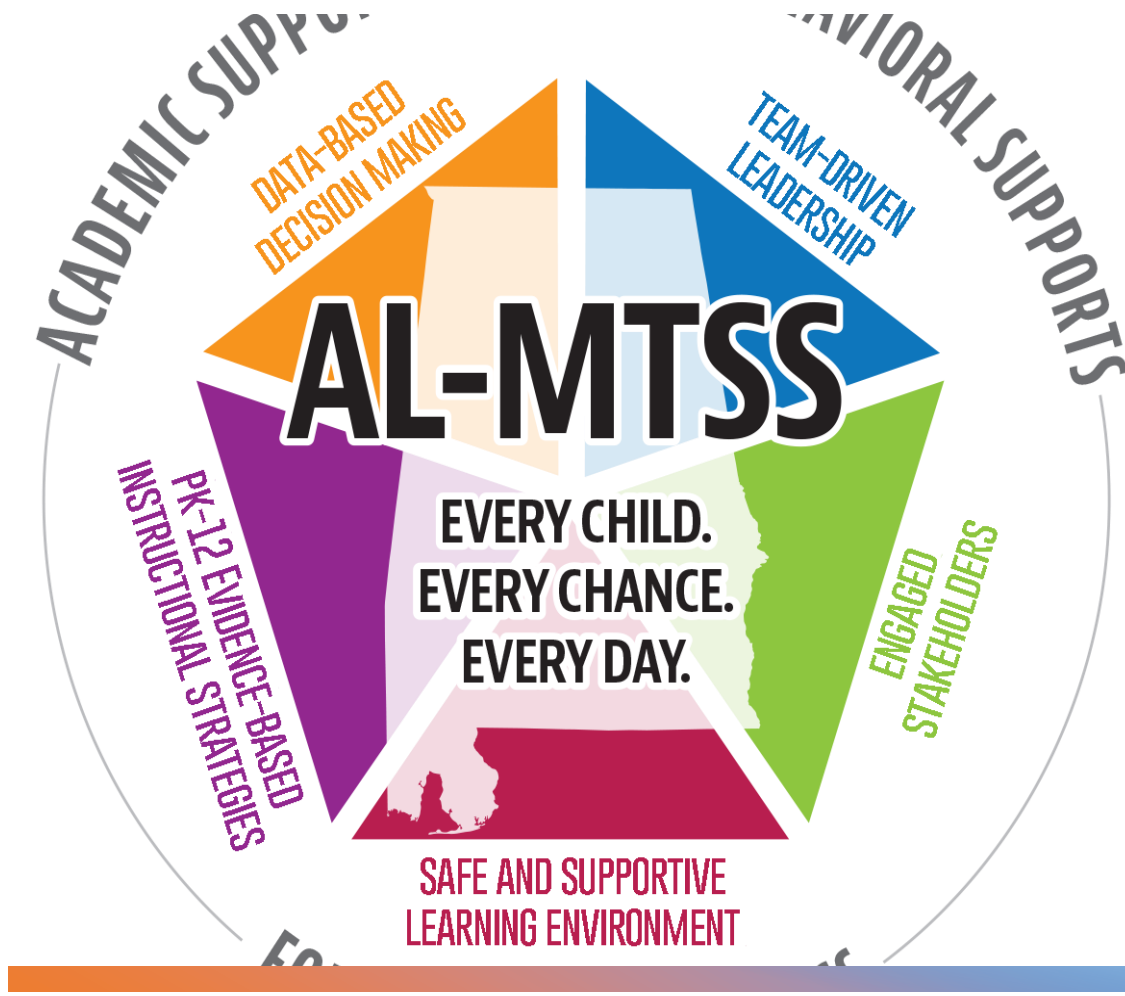


Alabama State Department of Education  
Instructional Services Section  
P. O. Box 302101  
Gordon Persons Building, Room 3345  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101



[2023-2024 Alabama Attendance Manual \(alabamaachieves.org\)](https://alabamaachieves.org)

# AL-Multi-Tiered System of Supports (AL-MTSS)



- Provides an MTSS Regional Coach
- Supports professional development, problem solving team
- Analyze data
- Maps resources
- Align the multi-tiered approach for appropriate interventions

# Unified Insights and Support for Attendance

Unified Insights

Dashboards

Utility Apps

Developer Tools

Dashboards

Essentials

Classroom

Usage

Stacy Royster

334-694-4972 |

stacy.royster@alsde.edu

Overview

Performance Indicators

Enrollment

Attendance

Behavior

Enrollment Overview

Admissions

Withdrawals

Programs

Attendance Overview

Chronic Absences

School Comparison

Classroom Absences

Behavior Overview

Suspension Usage

Academics

Assessments

Achievement

Core Subjects Summary

AP

Teacher Analysis

Standards by Grade

School Standard Progress

Student Standard Progress

ACAP Alternate

ACAP ELA

ACAP Summative

ACCESS

AP

ISTATION

Pre-ACT

Digital Learning

Literacy Act

Students

Reporting

Student Activity

Staff Activity

Student Activity Data Wall

Student Outcomes

3rd Grade Data

Retention

Good Cause

Reading Deficiency

Screened for Dyslexia

Student List

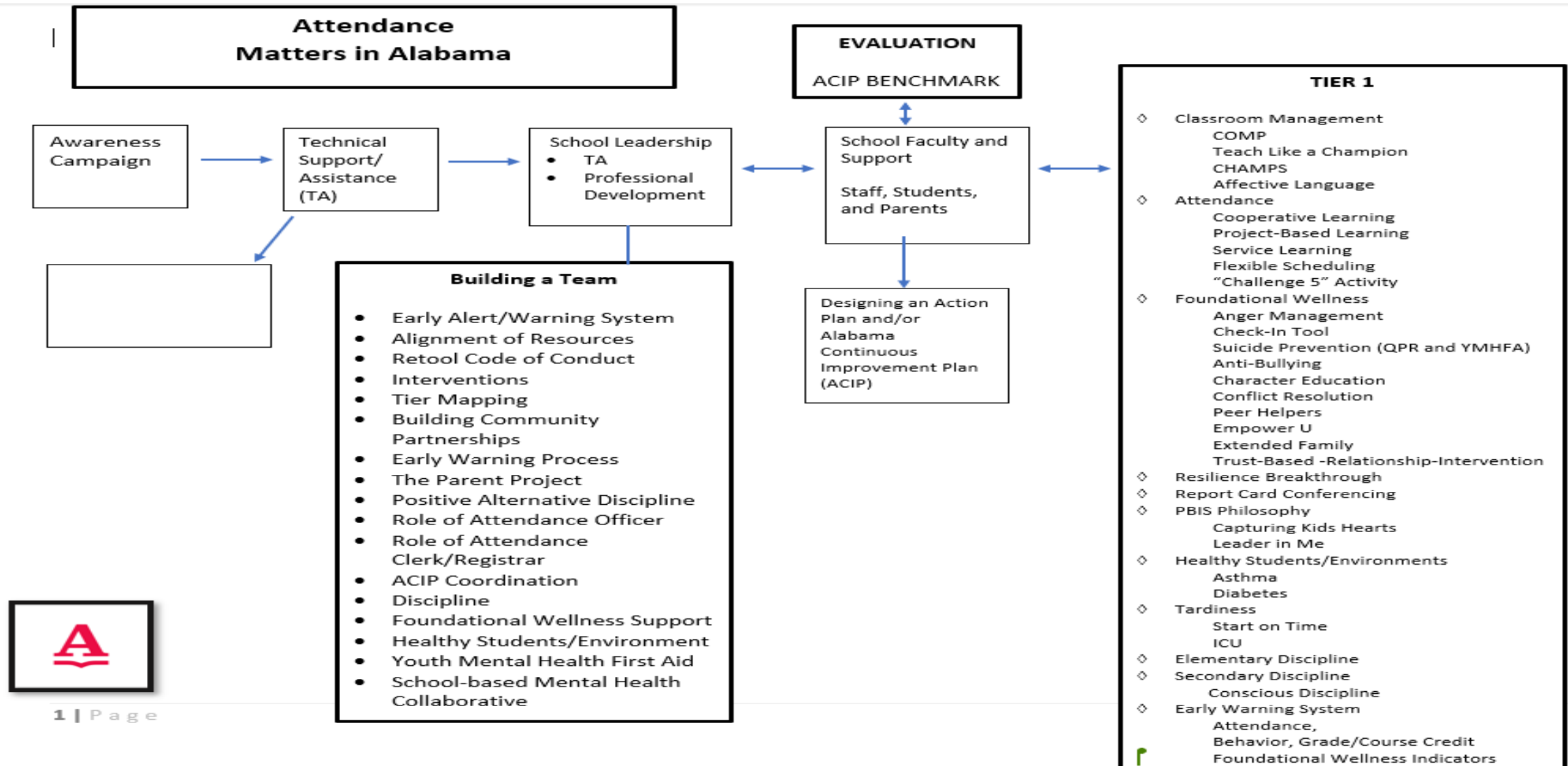
Attendance and Behavior

Geographic Information

AL	FEMALE
457	368,838
AMERICAN/ALASKAN NATIVE	ASIAN
1	11,057
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	PREFER NOT TO ANSWER
0	6
0	HOMELESS



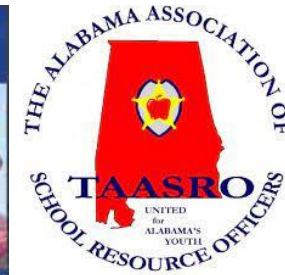
# Alabama Attendance Plan (sample)



# Resources: People, Programs, Organizations

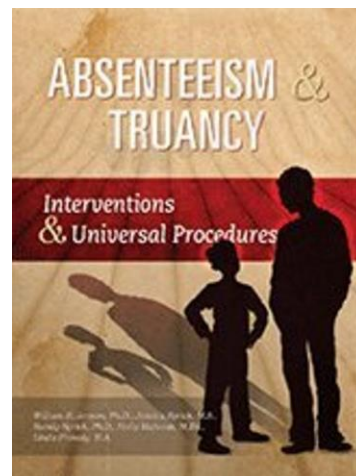


Helping  
Families  
Initiative





Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence



# Helping Families Initiative

## ALABAMA ATTENDANCE MANUAL



2021-2022

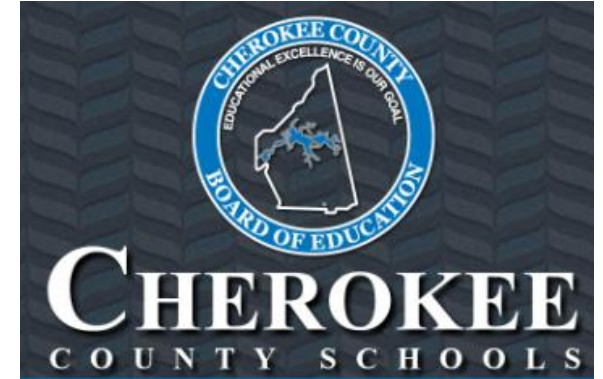
Eric G. Mackey  
State Superintendent of Education

Alabama State Department of Education  
Prevention and Support Services Section  
P. O. Box 302101

Gordon Persons Building, Room 5227  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101



# LEA Showcases with Attendance Focus



Russell County School District  
Our Vision is to inspire, empower, and educate with excellence.





# Sylacauga City Schools



# On The Horizon

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- Update of 2024-2025 Alabama Attendance Manual
- Attendance and Truancy Summit: A Call to Action
- Attendance Awareness Month
- Data Analysis Sessions
- ALSDE Office Hours



Questions?



# Contact Information

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