Task Force to Improve Attendance and Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

Division of Student Support and Federal Programs
Division of Assessment and Accountability

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Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

2025 Md. Laws, Ch. 243 (House Bill 879) *Task Force to Improve Attendance and Reduce Chronic Absenteeism in Schools* **was signed into law by Maryland Governor Wes Moore in May 2025. The statute requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to examine statewide trends in student attendance, identify root causes of chronic absenteeism, review national and local best practices, and develop guidance and tools to support local education agencies (LEAs) in improving attendance. A Task Force was convened by MSDE in September 2024 prior to the establishment of statutory requirements to address chronic absenteeism with members added to the Task Force as required by the statute. The statute also required that the Task Force report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor on or before December 31, 2025.**

The statute directs the Task Force to address several core areas related to chronic absenteeism, including: (1) analyze data regarding chronic absenteeism by students from schools in the State, including research, student attendance collection practices, and trends in statewide and local student attendance; (2) identify and evaluate local and national strategies and best practices to address chronic absenteeism; (3) identify differentiated and comprehensive responses for chronic absenteeism that prioritize prevention and intervention; (4) set a statewide goal for the reduction in chronic absenteeism throughout the State; (5) develop and distribute guidance on identifying and preventing chronic absenteeism to local school systems; (6) develop and distribute a toolkit on identifying and preventing chronic absenteeism for school leaders in each grade band (elementary, middle, and high school) that includes culturally responsive and nonpunitive strategies for reducing student absences; and (7) establish categories that identify reasons for chronic absenteeism by students from schools in the State, and collect data for each corresponding category for each LEA.

The Task Force was required to make recommendations on:

- A single definition of chronic absenteeism;
- The role that the community, public agencies, public school systems and schools, parents, and students have in solving the problem of chronic absenteeism;
- The best practices for data collection relating to student chronic absenteeism and tracking student attendance; and
- The most effective practices to prevent and eliminate chronic absenteeism that are culturally responsive and nonpunitive

This report provides the required update to the Maryland General Assembly on the work of the Task Force from September 2024 through December 2025. During this reporting period, the Task Force analyzed statewide and local attendance data; reviewed national research and evidence-based models; examined predictive analyses prepared by MSDE's Office of Research; and engaged LEA and stakeholder partners to inform the development of statewide guidance.

The work of the Task Force during this period focused on several core areas outlined in the statute, including attendance data collection and analysis, identification of effective prevention and intervention strategies, and development of practical tools and professional learning supports for LEAs. Key accomplishments include the implementation of monthly statewide attendance data collection beginning in September 2025; the delivery of three statewide attendance-focused professional learning

webinars; and the development of the Spring Attendance Action Toolkit, Welcome Back to School Attendance Toolkit, and Year-Round Attendance Implementation Toolkit. These efforts were intentionally aligned with Maryland's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to promote early identification, tiered intervention, and continuous improvement.

The statute required the State Department of Education to update the current Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) on attendance on or before December 31, 2025. The update to the regulation required the inclusion of common definitions, and the incorporation of effective practices to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. The proposed amended regulation defines the terms multi-tiered system of supports, chronic absenteeism, and day of attendance, and also outlines new elements that must be included in LEA attendance policies. In addition to existing requirements, updated LEA policies must include best practices for identifying, preventing, and eliminating chronic absenteeism that are culturally responsive and non-punitive. Amendments to the regulation were brought to the State Board for Permission to Publish on December 9, 2025.

Findings from the Task Force's review of data indicate that chronic absenteeism remains significantly above pre-pandemic levels for many student groups, with persistent disparities by socioeconomic status, disability, and multilingual learner status, as well as notable geographic variation across the State. Analyses presented by the MSDE Office of Research further demonstrate that attendance patterns in the early grades are strong predictors of later chronic absenteeism, underscoring the importance of prevention-focused, data-driven strategies.

The Task Force will continue meeting through 2026 to address the need to reduce chronic absenteeism in Maryland.

National and Maryland Context

NATIONAL TRENDS

Chronic absenteeism has emerged as one of the most significant post-pandemic challenges facing public education. Nationally, the percentage of students who were chronically absent doubled between 2018 and 2022. While modest improvements occurred in SY 2023-2024, national rates remain far above pre-pandemic levels. National research identifies the following contributors:

- Increased student mental health needs
- Continued academic disengagement following pandemic interruptions
- Transportation challenges
- Increased family mobility and instability
- Limited access to health care, particularly for low-income students
- Increased educator burnout, turnover, and staffing shortages

States such as Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Utah, each of which Maryland has examined closely, have implemented comprehensive statewide attendance strategies that include early waning data systems, targeted family engagement strategies, school-community partnerships, and accountability structures aligned to chronic absenteeism reduction.

MARYLAND TRENDS

Maryland reflects these national trends but has also taken proactive steps to address them. The statewide chronic absenteeism rate peaked near 30% in the 2022-2023 school year and remained elevated in the 2023-2024 school year. The State has set an ambitious goal of reducing chronic absenteeism by 50% by the 2025-2026 school year and has aligned cross-agency partners, data systems, and strategic supports to advance this work. The urgency of this effort guided the Task Force's discussions, analyses, and recommendations throughout the year.

Findings from SY 2023-2024 and monthly SY 2024-2025 submissions include:

- Persistent gaps among FARMS students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners
- High chronic absence in Pre-K through Grade 2, with implications for early literacy
- Transition years (Grades 6-7 and Grade 9) demonstrate elevated absence patterns
- Transportation disruptions and school bus driver staffing shortages
- Increased mental health needs and disengagement from in-person learning
- Regional "hot spots" where chronic absenteeism remains significantly above state averages

Maryland's improvements to data collection beginning in September 2025 have strengthened early-warning capabilities statewide.

Task Force Activities and Accomplishments to Date

Since its establishment pursuant to Chapter 243, 2025 Md. Laws *Task Force to Improve Attendance and Reduce Chronic Absenteeism in Schools*, MSDE has undertaken a phased and strategic body of work aligned to its statutory charge. Activities conducted to date are summarized below in the order in which they were implemented.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TASK FORCE

MSDE convened a Task Force in September 2024—prior to the establishment of the law— with membership representing state and local education agencies, educators, students, higher education, health professionals, legislators, and national experts. The Task Force adopted a regular meeting schedule and an agreed-upon scope of work focused on data-informed decision-making, evidence-based practice, and development of statewide guidance. Early meetings established shared definitions, reviewed the legislative charge, and outlined priority areas for analysis and action. To date, the Task Force has convened a total of nine times.

PARTNERSHIP WITH ATTENDANCE WORKS

Recognizing the critical role that student attendance plays in academic success and long-term outcomes, the Task Force strategically partnered early in its work with Attendance Works—a nationally recognized leader in the field of attendance improvement. This organization has been at the forefront of advancing evidence-based strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism and promote equitable access to education across the United States.

Attendance Works brought to the partnership a wealth of expertise, offering technical guidance grounded in national research and policy trends. Their involvement ensured that Maryland's approach to attendance was not only informed by local needs but also aligned with proven practices from across the country. Through this collaboration, the Task Force gained access to a comprehensive collection of resources, including the *Attendance Playbook*, developed in partnership with FutureEd. This playbook provided actionable strategies tailored to different levels of need and emphasized the importance of prevention, early intervention, and intensive support.

Importantly, Attendance Works helped the Task Force frame attendance improvement within the context of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which is a framework that promotes proactive, data-driven approaches to student support. The Task Force determined that Tier 1 Foundational Support should include engaging with families, student-teacher relationships, and Community Schools Supports. Tier 2 Targeted Support should include early warning systems and targeted home visits. Tier 3 Intensive Intervention should include interagency case management. By integrating these attendance strategies into MTSS, Maryland positioned itself to address absenteeism not as a standalone issue, but as a key indicator of student well-being and engagement.

The national perspective offered by Attendance Works was instrumental in shaping Maryland's attendance initiatives to reflect best practices and emerging trends. Their guidance helped ensure that the State's efforts were not only responsive to current challenges but also proactive, scalable, and

sustainable. This partnership underscored Maryland's commitment to leveraging national expertise to strengthen local capacity, improve student outcomes, and promote educational equity.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH REVIEW

A central focus of the Task Force's work involved review and analysis of statewide attendance data presented by MSDE's Office of Research, Data, and Accountability. This included multi-year trend analyses, cohort studies examining pre- and post-pandemic attendance patterns, predictive modeling of early-grade attendance, and preliminary geographic hot spot analyses. The Task Force examined disparities across student groups, grade levels, and regions, with particular attention to early learners, transition years, and students experiencing economic disadvantage. Findings from this analysis informed subsequent toolkit development and strategy alignment.

SPRING ATTENDANCE ACTION TOOLKIT

The Spring Attendance Action Toolkit, released by MSDE in March 2025, was developed to support LEAs in addressing chronic absenteeism during a period of the school year when attendance challenges often intensify. Spring months are routinely associated with increased absenteeism due to academic fatigue, testing schedules, seasonal illness, family mobility, and disengagement as summer approaches. The toolkit provides timely, actionable guidance designed to stabilize attendance, strengthen student engagement, and prevent marginal absenteeism from escalating into chronic absenteeism before the end of the school year.

The toolkit emphasizes prevention and early intervention through the use of attendance data, tiered strategies, and positive family engagement. It includes tools to help schools identify students approaching chronic absenteeism thresholds, Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions, engage families in collaborative problem solving, and plan targeted spring attendance campaigns. By providing LEAs with practical resources aligned to best practices, the Spring Attendance Action Toolkit supported LEAs in responding proactively to attendance risks during high-impact windows.

To accompany the release of the Spring Attendance Action Toolkit, MSDE partnered with Attendance Works to deliver a two-part statewide workshop series (April 2025) designed to help LEAs address the well-documented "spring attendance slide" and prevent students from reaching chronic absenteeism thresholds. The first session, *Working Together to Reduce the Spring Attendance Slide*, provided practical strategies for stabilizing attendance during final months of the school year. The second session, *Improving Attendance for Student at the Cusp of Chronic Absence*, focused on identifying students approaching chronic absenteeism, analyzing root causes, and implementing targeted, research-based interventions to keep students below the 18-day threshold.

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TOOLKIT

The Welcome Back to School Attendance Toolkit, released by MSDE in August 2025, was developed to support LEAs in establishing strong attendance habits at the start of the academic year. Research consistently demonstrates that early attendance patterns are highly predictive of student engagement, academic success, and the likelihood of chronic absenteeism later in the school year. Accordingly, the toolkit is designed to help LEAs set clear expectations, build strong relationships, and prevent attendance challenges from emerging during the first weeks of school.

The toolkit focuses on proactive strategies that promote belonging, connection, and consistency, including guidance on early communication with families, first-month attendance monitoring, school climate practices, and early outreach for students missing instructional time at the beginning of the school year. By emphasizing prevention, relationship-building, and early identification, the Welcome Back to School Attendance Toolkit supports LEAs in launching the school year with a strong foundation for regular attendance.

In conjunction with the release of the toolkit, MSDE hosted a statewide *Welcome Back to School Attendance* Workshop to guide LEAs in applying the toolkit's strategies during the critical opening weeks of the school year. The workshop brought together Directors and Coordinators within student services, LEA community school coordinators, representatives from data, family engagement, communication, and extended learning to examine early-year attendance data, discuss common beginning-of-year barriers, and shared actionable practices for strengthening routines, outreach, and student engagement.

STUDENT SERVICES SUMMER CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE WORKSHOP

As part of MSDE's broader statewide capacity-building efforts, the Division of Student Support and Federal Programs hosted a 2025 Student Services Summer Conference, which included a two-day professional learning workshop on the *Welcome Back to School Toolkit*. This convening brought together LEA-level professionals, including Directors of Student Services, school counselors, school social workers, Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs), Title IV, Part A coordinators, behavioral health specialists, and school psychologists. The workshop was designed to deepen participants' understanding of the toolkit, strengthen local implementation capacity, and promote consistent, research-aligned attendance practices across Maryland's 24 LEAs. Over the course of two days, participants engaged in effective opening-of-year attendance campaigns, data-reflection discussions, scenario-based activities, and peer-to-peer collaboration.

YEAR-ROUND ATTENDANCE IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

The Year-Round Attendance Implementation Toolkit, to be finalized in December 2025, is a comprehensive resource designed to guide LEAs in building sustainable, system-wide approaches to improving attendance throughout the entire school year. Grounded in research and aligned to Maryland's definition of chronic absenteeism, the toolkit frames attendance not as a compliance issue or isolated intervention, but as a key indicator of student connection, opportunity, and access to supports.

The toolkit reflects an understanding that chronic absenteeism is strongly associated with adverse academic, social-emotional, and long-term outcomes, particularly when attendance challenges emerge in the early grades. Drawing on national research, including students on the long-term impacts of chronic absenteeism and post-pandemic attendance patterns, the toolkit emphasizes the need for a coordinated, prevention-focused, and data-informed strategy that engages students, families, schools, and community partners.

The purpose of the Year-Round Attendance Implementation Toolkit is to provide LEAs with a structured roadmap for implementing six key ingredients for attendance systems-building: Actionable Data, Capacity Building, Positive Engagement, Adequate and Equitable Resources, Strategic Partnerships, and Shared Responsibility. The toolkit is organized to support continuous improvement

across all phases of the school year and encourages LEAs to adopt a systemic approach that integrates attendance into existing MTSS, school climate, and student support frameworks.

Each key ingredient section includes a definition, recommended LEA-level actions, examples of best practice, and curated resources and tools An appendix of relevant Maryland laws and regulations is also included. Collectively, the toolkit equips LEAs to promote timely intervention, address root causes of absenteeism, strengthen student connectedness, and advance equitable outcomes for all students.

STATEWIDE ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Chapter 243 required MSDE to review current attendance regulations, adopt common definitions, and incorporate effective practices. The current proposed amended regulation incorporates recommendations of the Task Force. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.05 – *Student Attendance Policy* requires each Maryland local school system to adopt a policy that promotes regular attendance and outlines clear expectations and procedures. This includes defining lawful and unlawful absences, setting attendance standards, verifying absences, outlining penalties and make-up work procedures, and establishing systems for monitoring attendance, rewarding good attendance, and handling appeals. The policy must also ensure clear communication with stakeholders and be grounded in legal authority.

The proposed amended regulation defines the terms multi-tiered system of supports, chronic absenteeism, and day of attendance. The amended regulation also outlines new elements that must be included in LEA attendance policies. In addition to existing requirements, updated LEA policies must include best practices for identifying, preventing, and eliminating chronic absenteeism that are culturally responsive and non-punitive, which may include, but not limited to:

- Conducting an in-depth analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to identify priorities for support;
- Identifying and utilizing a team at the local school system level to oversee the systemwide strategy for attendance improvement;
- Requiring each school to have a team to oversee the school-wide strategies for attendance improvement and reduction of chronic absenteeism;
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive communication plan to communicate the importance of regular student attendance to students and parents or guardians;
- Identifying and addressing common barriers to attendance to determine the best course of action to improve student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism;
- Engaging in continuous improvement activities using qualitative and quantitative data to determine effective strategies;
- Promoting non-punitive strategies that address the root causes of student absence; and
- Engaging families using positive, proactive, and non-punitive strategies.

The amended regulation specifies that updated LEA policies must include a Multi-Tiered System of Supports that prioritizes evidence-based identification and responsive strategies to ensure high-quality academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports for all students and specifies that each local school system shall review its student attendance data annually, publicly post the most recent student attendance data on the school system's website, and requires each school within the local school

system to include the most recent student attendance policy on the school's website and in the school's student handbook.

The amended regulation requires MSDE to collect data on student attendance to support local school systems in the development and implementation of local student attendance policies.

On December 9, 2025, the [regulation](#) was presented to the State Board of Education, which granted permission to publish the regulation.

Data Insights from the MSDE Office of Research

As part of its charge, the Task Force reviewed extensive analyses conducted by MSDE's Office of Research. These analyses provided critical insights into the predictors of chronic absenteeism, the long-term effects of early attendance patterns, and the heterogeneous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Maryland's students. The findings informed the design of the statewide tiered attendance strategies and reinforced the importance of early, targeted and data-driven interventions.

EARLY ATTENDANCE AS A PREDICTIVE INDICATOR

The Research Office conducted a multi-cohort, multi-year analysis to examine the predictive strength of early grade attendance. Preliminary results showed that attendance patterns in the early grades, particularly Pre-K through Grade 3, are highly predictive of chronic absenteeism in the later grades, including after major systemic disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key findings included:

- Pre-K Absences and Kindergarten Attendance: Low attendance in Pre-K was associated with significantly lower Kindergarten attendance rates, suggesting that engagement patterns begin before compulsory schooling.
- Grade 3 as a Critical Benchmark: Given the importance of Grade 3 readiness and literacy milestones, the Task Force examined absenteeism beginning in Grade 3 as a baseline. Students are chronically absent in subsequent years.
- Predictive Modeling: Analyses conducted by the Office of Research demonstrated that early attendance rates were strong predictors of post-pandemic chronic absenteeism, with predictive validity increasing when multiple early-grade years were analyzed together.

These analyses reinforce a central finding that chronic absenteeism is path dependent. Students who are chronically absent early are far more likely to remain chronically absent in later grades unless meaningful intervention occurs.

COHORT ANALYSES AND PANDEMIC IMPACT

To better understand the heterogeneous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on attendance, the Research Office examined multiple cohorts starting in different years. This allowed the Task Force to isolate the impact of the pandemic from pre-existing trends.

Key analytical insights included:

By shifting the cohort start back to 2016, analysts were able to examine attendance trends unaffected by the pandemic. These analyses found minimal change in chronic absenteeism during early high school transitions in pre-pandemic years, suggesting that the dramatic rise post-pandemic cannot be attributed solely to grade transitions.

- Across multiple models, Grade 10 showed a consistent increase in chronic absenteeism, even after adjusting for pandemic impacts. Additional difference-in-difference modeling is being

pursued to quantify the relative contributions of the pandemic compared to typical high school transition challenges.

- The approach will help determine how much of the rise in chronic absenteeism is attributable to the pandemic versus typical developmental or structural shifts.

SOCIOECONOMIC BARRIERS AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

The Research Office emphasized the need to better understand socioeconomic factors and how they intersect with attendance. Current reporting separates students into "economically disadvantaged" (ED).
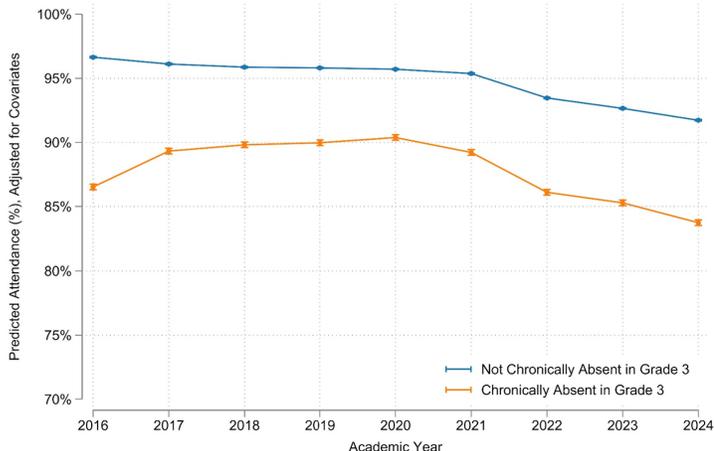
Results

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Attendance Gaps by Starting Grade and Absentee Status

For a cohort of students starting in grade 3 in 2016, **students not chronically absent** consistently have attendance rates significantly higher than those that **were chronically absent** in grade 3.*

Initially, the attendance **gap between groups narrowed with time**.

The **Covid-19 pandemic reversed this trend**, causing a widening attendance gap in subsequent years.

*When adjusted for geography, demographics, and service statuses.

Trends in Chronic Absences in Maryland

State Trends in Chronic Absences

Chronic absences have gradually declined since 2022 but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Chronic absences at the high school level have seen less reductions since 2022 than at the elementary and middle school levels.
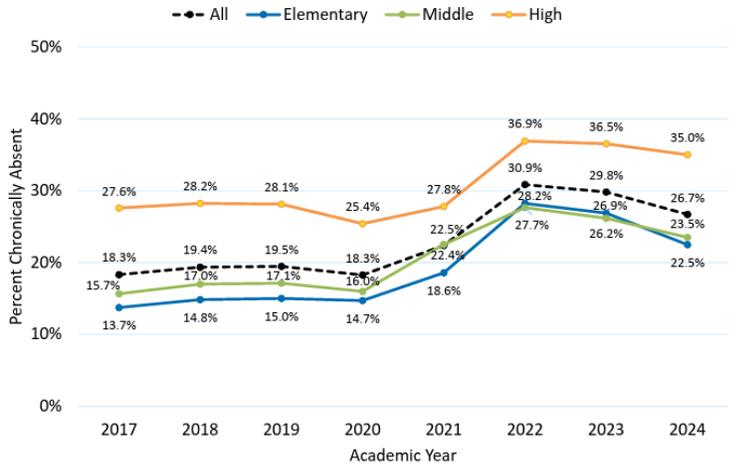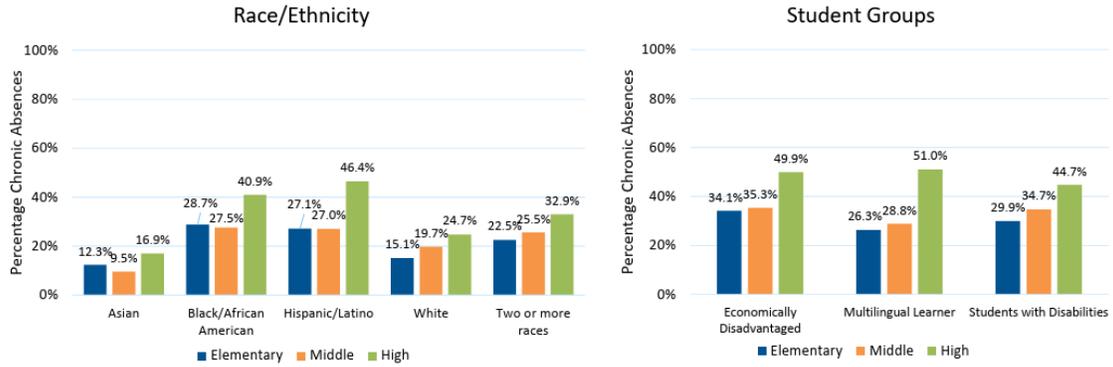

Note: The end of the 2020 and the majority of the 2021 academic years were largely virtual instruction in most Maryland LEAs. Grade spans are as follows: Elementary – grades K-5; Middle – grades 6-8; High – grades 9-12

Chronic Absences by Student Group (SY 2023-2024)

Chronic absence rates in SY 2023-2024 were highest for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and students in special service groups.

Race/Ethnicity

Percentage Chronic Absences

	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Two or more races
Elementary	12.3%	28.7%	27.1%	15.1%	22.5%
Middle	9.5%	27.5%	27.0%	19.7%	25.5%
High	16.9%	40.9%	46.4%	24.7%	32.9%

■ Elementary ■ Middle ■ High

Student Groups

Percentage Chronic Absences

	Economically Disadvantaged	Multilingual Learner	Students with Disabilities
Elementary	34.1%	26.3%	29.9%
Middle	35.3%	28.8%	34.7%
High	49.9%	51.0%	44.7%

■ Elementary ■ Middle ■ High

Grade spans are as follows: Elementary – grades K-5; Middle – grades 6-8; High – grades 9-12

Data Collection on Students At-Risk for Chronic Absence

As part of MSDE's ongoing commitment to reducing chronic absenteeism, the Division of Assessment and Accountability launched a new monthly data collection in September 2025: the At Risk for Chronic Absence Collection. This collection provides timely, aggregated LEA-level data throughout the school year to support early identification of students who may be on a trajectory toward chronic absenteeism. A student is "at-risk for chronic absence" if they have been in membership in a school for at least one day and have already missed 10% or more of the school days while enrolled at that school.

The fundamental purpose of collecting this data is to help both LEAs and MSDE identify attendance challenges as early as possible in the school year. With regular monthly updates, MSDE can monitor attendance trends statewide, identify emerging patterns, and collaborate with LEAs to develop and implement evidence-based strategies to support students facing attendance barriers. Beginning in September 2025, MSDE committed to posting monthly statewide and LEA-level summaries by the middle of each month, creating a consistent and transparent reporting cycle.

Monthly At-Risk for Chronic Absence data for September 2025 and October 2025 are available on MSDE's website https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/dsfss/attendance.aspx.

Key Findings to Date

Through extensive data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and review of national and local best practices, the _Task Force to Improve Attendance and Reduce Chronic Absenteeism_ identified several critical themes that are shaping Maryland's statewide attendance strategy. These findings reflect both the complexity of the issue and the urgency of implementing systemic, equity-driven solutions.

The Task Force identified several themes:

1. **Chronic absenteeism is a complex, multifaceted issue requiring systemic solutions.**

   The Task Force affirmed that chronic absenteeism cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. It is driven by a constellation of interrelated factors, including academic disengagement, transportation disruptions, inconsistent communication systems, health-related challenges, and family mobility. These barriers vary across communities and student populations, requiring differentiated and comprehensive responses. The Task Force emphasized that sustainable improvement demands coordinated efforts across schools, districts, families, and community partners, embedded within broader student support frameworks such as Maryland's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

2. **Early identification is essential to prevention and long-term success.**

   Analyses conducted by MSDE's Office of Research revealed that attendance patterns in early grades, particularly Pre-K through Grade 3, are highly predictive of chronic absenteeism in later years. Students who begin their educational journey with inconsistent attendance are significantly more likely to experience ongoing absenteeism unless timely interventions are implemented. Maryland's shift to monthly attendance data collection beginning in September 2025 has dramatically improved the State's early-warning capabilities, enabling schools and districts to identify at-risk students sooner and respond with targeted supports.

3. **Strong relationships are central to attendance improvement.**

   Students are more likely to attend school consistently when they feel safe, supported, and connected. The Task Force highlighted the foundational role of positive school climate, culturally responsive practices, and authentic family engagement in fostering a sense of belonging. Attendance strategies must prioritize relationship-building—not only between students and educators, but also among families, schools, and communities. This relational approach is especially critical in the wake of pandemic-related disruptions that have eroded trust and connection for many students.

4. **Schools need sustained capacity-building to implement effective attendance strategies.**

   Local education agencies (LEAs) consistently expressed the need for ongoing professional development and technical assistance. Key areas of support include interpreting attendance data, operating school-based attendance teams, engaging families in nonpunitive ways, and

integrating attendance strategies into broader MTSS and school climate initiatives. The Task Force recognized that building local capacity is essential to ensuring that attendance improvement efforts are not only initiated but sustained over time.

5. **Chronic absenteeism is a pressing equity issue.**

   Data reviewed by the Task Force revealed persistent disparities in chronic absenteeism rates among students experiencing poverty, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students of color. These disparities reflect broader systemic inequities and underscore the need for attendance strategies that are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and rooted in equity. The Task Force emphasized that reducing chronic absenteeism is not only a matter of improving educational outcomes—it is a matter of advancing educational justice.

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