

ABOUT THE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM INDICATOR

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all states are required to adopt a non-academic measure of school quality or student success. Oklahoma – in addition to 36 other states and Washington, D.C. – has selected Chronic Absenteeism. By highlighting this important information, Oklahoma is able to collect information that can prompt investigating the causes of lost instructional time.



The Chronic Absenteeism indicator collects information on attendance to ensure students receive the instructional time they need to be academically successful. Schools earn points based on the percentage of students in good attendance (i.e., not chronically absent). It is important to note that the Chronic Absenteeism school accountability indicator – the focus of this document – is not synonymous with a local district attendance policy (please see the reverse side of this document for additional information).

WHAT IS BEING MEASURED?

Students cannot learn if they are not present for instruction; an absence of as few as two days per month puts them at risk of falling behind academically. To maximize instructional time, the state accountability system accounts for all absences – excused or unexcused – regardless of reason. **A student is considered chronically absent after missing 10 percent or more of instructional time during a school year.**



WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

Regular attendance is predictive of student and school success, and the Chronic Absenteeism indicator prioritizes a focus on the individual student as an integral part of a school learning community. Research indicates that missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason substantially increases the risk of students falling behind academically, which may translate to third-graders who struggle to master reading, sixth-graders who fail core subjects and ninth-graders who drop out of high school.

Schools can affect positive changes in attendance by working closely with families and community partners to learn why students are chronically absent and provide supports that help ensure they are in school and learning.

HOW IS THE INDICATOR MEASURED?

Ten points are possible under this indicator, and schools earn points based on the percentage of students not chronically absent.

For additional information on understanding the Chronic Absenteeism indicator, see e-learning module 5.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are absences related to a student's disability included?

If a student is receiving services – even out-of-school care – outlined in an IEP/504 plan, that student should be marked present in the state student information system. For additional information on students with disabilities and chronic absenteeism, see our [FAQs for students with disabilities](http://bit.ly/SWDfaqs) (<http://bit.ly/SWDfaqs>).

Are activity absences included?

Students who are at a school-related function (e.g., field trip or sports competition) are present for accountability purposes. These students may have a locally defined attendance/absence code but are reported present in the state student information system.

How is chronic absenteeism different from a school's attendance policy?

Local district attendance policies vary in how they code absences (excused or unexcused, school activity, medical, etc.). Even excused absences count toward the Chronic Absenteeism indicator in order to identify and support students whose absences put them at academic risk.

How is chronic absenteeism different from Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and truancy?

ADA can mask high absenteeism rates. Since it is a snapshot by day of total attendance, it does not track or identify individual students who are regularly absent. Schools can have a 90 percent ADA with 30 percent of students chronically absent. In contrast, truancy is a measure of only unexcused absences. By including all absences, chronic absenteeism measures all lost instructional time.

Are all students included in the report card calculation?

Only students who are continuously enrolled for the school year – those who meet Full Academic Year (FAY) criteria – are included in the calculation. Additionally, students who have experienced significant trauma or medical conditions may have individual absences exempted. For more information, see our [Medical Exemptions for Chronic Absenteeism document](http://bit.ly/ExemptGuidance) (bit.ly/ExemptGuidance).

How can schools reduce chronic absenteeism?

When the underlying reasons for student absences are unmasked, it is possible to implement strategies to improve attendance and thus academic achievement. Working together, all members of the community – schools, families and community partners – can turn around chronic absenteeism. For additional resources and strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism, visit [Attendance Works](http://bit.ly/AttendanceWks) (bit.ly/AttendanceWks).