

### Chronic Absenteeism

A national perspective



#### WHO WE ARE.

The essential, indispensable member of any team addressing education policy.



#### WHAT WE DO.

We believe in the power of learning from experience, and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.





### HOW WE DO IT.





#### Today's Chronic Absenteeism

- Doubled from pre-COVID pandemic levels
- Nearly 14.7 million kids were chronically absent in the 2021-22 school year
- Data from the 2022-23 school year showed improvements
- New and incomplete data from last year is positive

# Effects of Missing School

- Difficulty reading by third grade
- Low achievement
- Falling off the path to graduate

# Chronic Absenteeism is not Uniform

#### Absences are higher student groups

- Grade level
  - kindergarten
  - high school
- Students from low-income families
- Students from communities of color
- Students with disabilities
- Students who are English language learners

# Definition of Chronic Absenteeism

- Typically defined as any student missing 10% or more of school days.
- Some states use number of days missed.
- Most state definitions include ANY absence:
  - Excused
  - Unexcused
  - Suspensions

#### Truancy vs. Chronically Absent

#### Truancy

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Stresses compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal and administrative solutions

#### Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes the impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

# Beyond the Definition of Chronic Absenteeism



- Definitions of a day of school
- Excused vs unexcused absences

# What is a school day?

- State- or local-level decision.
- Most common state definition of a day of attendance is typically ½ of a day.
- Almost 15 states allow the attendance policy to be made at the local level.

## Excused vs. Unexcused

#### State policies vary:

- Excused and unexcused in regulation
- Particular absences counted as present, for example, school events or 4-H

# Tracking Excused Absences

- Data to inform
- Allows students to make up work and provides continued engagement
- The latest legislative sessions saw several bills regarding excused absences:
  - Religious reasons
  - Mental and behavioral health
  - Civic engagement
  - Work-based Learning



#### Reporting Chronic Absenteeism

- Required through EdFacts
- Required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- 36 states use Chronic Absenteeism as a measure of School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) for federal school accountability

# Shifting Perspectives

State policies are shifting with a focus on:

- Consequences of lost learning time
- Identifying barriers to attendance
- Prevention strategies
- Data collection

#### Connecticut



## Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) (2021)

- 15 Districts
- Identify underlying issues
- Home visits to build relationships
- State dashboard
- Early results show attendance improvement

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#### New Mexico



#### Attendance for Success Act (2019)

- Purpose is to prevent absences
- Requires local Attendance Improvement Plans
- Requires Early Warning System
- Four-tiered intervention protocol
- Community data dashboard

#### Rhode Island

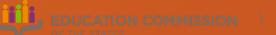


#### Attendance Matters RI (2023)

- Data Dashboard
- LEA support
- Public outreach campaign
- Community engagement









#### THANK YOU

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