



Why Attendance Matters

Critical Shift in Focus



Accountability
Indicator

The diagram consists of two large, overlapping chevron shapes pointing to the right. The left chevron is blue and contains the text 'Accountability Indicator'. The right chevron is orange and contains the text 'Individual Student'. The two chevrons overlap, with the orange one positioned slightly behind and to the right of the blue one, creating a sense of progression or shift.

Individual
Student

Truancy vs. Chronic Absenteeism

Truancy

- Counts unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Uses punitive, legal solutions



Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive strategies, positive messaging

What is chronic absenteeism?

- Is a strong early warning indicator for risk of falling behind
- Focuses on lost instructional time as opposed to truancy
- Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10 percent or more of enrolled instructional days **for any reason**
- Includes excused and unexcused absences

Chronic Absenteeism in New Oklahoma School Report Card

- In Oklahoma, chronic absenteeism is the ESSA-required indicator of school quality or student success.
- Worth 10 points out of 90 (approximately 11 percent)
- Calculated based on percentage of FAY students who were chronically absent during the 2017-18 school year
 - For example, if 25 percent of FAY students were identified as chronically absent, school would receive 7.5 out of 10 points.

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- Chronically absent third-graders were less likely to be reading on grade level (Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, 2016).
- Students who are chronically absent in middle school are more likely to drop out of high school (BERC, 2011).
- Frequent absences from school can shape adulthood (poverty, diminished health, involvement in the criminal justice system)

Why Attendance Matters

- Multiple research studies link poor attendance with reduced academic outcomes.
- Chronically missing school is an indication of conditions schools can successfully address.

Factors we **CANNOT** control ...

- Language barriers
- Parents and families
- Home environment
- Previous educational experiences
- Students from poverty and/or with health issues
- Parent income
- Educational level of parents
- Parents' attitude/values
- Legislation
- Testing restrictions
- School funding
- Length of school year

Factors we CAN control ...

- School environment
- Expectations
- Attitudes toward students
- Student engagement
- Safety in building
- Communication with families
- Teacher quality
- Teacher support
- Quality of instruction
- Praise and recognition
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Use of best practices and research

What can we do?

- Know the research on how chronic absenteeism affects students.
- Focus on improving engagement: interconnections, relationships and instructional practices that support students daily.
- Regularly communicate with staff, students and families about the importance of daily attendance.
- Engage in community-wide efforts to eliminate chronic absence by addressing its main causes.

Research is clear that schools and districts can impact students' absenteeism rates.

Attendance Works has excellent attendance resources for school use. Visit attendanceworks.org to learn more.