

ATTENDANCE COUNTS

WHAT NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE DOING TO REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENCE

Regular school attendance in the early years puts children on track for becoming proficient readers. The opposite is also true. Chronic absence in kindergarten is associated with lower levels of literacy in first grade and lower likelihood of grade-level reading by the end of third grade. During the 2015/16 school year, more than 64,000 North Carolina elementary school children were chronically absent.

Chronically absent students are found in every type of community—urban, suburban and rural. In fact, seventy percent of respondents in a recent survey by EdNC reported that chronic absence is an issue in their communities. The good news is that chronic absence is a problem we can solve through state, district, school and community policy and action. This report focuses on the role of school districts.

School districts in North Carolina set their own attendance policies and practices. Therefore, district actions impact:

- The accuracy and effectiveness of attendance data collection, reporting, analysis and use by districts, schools and families.
- The degree to which families and other stakeholders receive positive messaging, education and engagement about regular attendance and prompt intervention when necessary.
- Whether strategic plans are in place around regular attendance at the community, district, school and individual student levels.
- The level of collaboration with community partners to better understand and address chronic absence.

This report shares the results of a district-level self-assessment that asked districts to share which of their attendance policies and practices are strong, and where there are opportunities for improvement. The assessment responses are the self-reported impressions of school district superintendent office staff. It should be noted that for a handful of districts,

multiple responses were received, some of which offered differing impressions of districts' strengths and weaknesses. Where there was more than one respondent from a district, the most senior staff member's response was the one included in the analysis.

Bright spots from around the state are also included, which offer actionable steps that districts can learn from to improve regular school attendance.

Only 39% of North Carolina fourth graders scored at or above reading proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2017.

And only 24% of students from economically disadvantaged families.

**READING IN THE
EARLY GRADES PREDICTS
HIGH SCHOOL AND
LATER SUCCESS.**

What is Chronic Absence?

Most children miss a few days of school each year without long-term consequences. However, when they are chronically absent, defined nationally and in NC as **missing 10 percent of enrolled school days within one academic year for any reason**, their school success is at significant risk. Chronic absence is not the same metric as average daily attendance. While average daily attendance measures what percent of the student population is present (and absent) on a given day, the chronic absence rate measures what percentage of individual students are missing more than 10 percent of the school days.

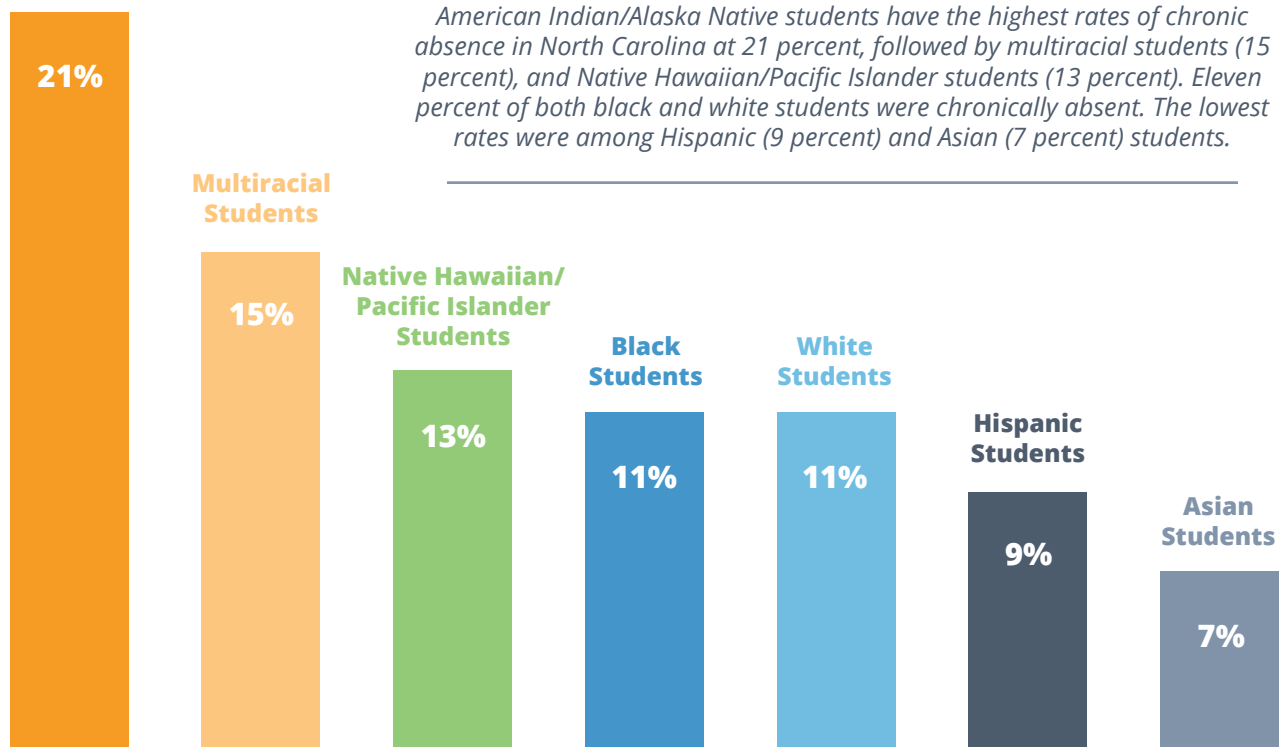
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Research is clear that consistent school attendance in prekindergarten and the early grades helps boost children's learning, achievement and motivation.¹ Young children who are chronically absent are significantly more likely to be chronically absent when they are older and have lower academic performance.² Chronic absence can also be a warning sign that a child or family has been exposed to trauma. Exposure to adverse early childhood experiences is associated with higher rates of chronic absence.³ Reducing chronic absence from school can therefore be an important factor in supporting young children's development and improving third grade reading outcomes.

CHRONIC ABSENCE IN THE EARLY GRADES IN NC

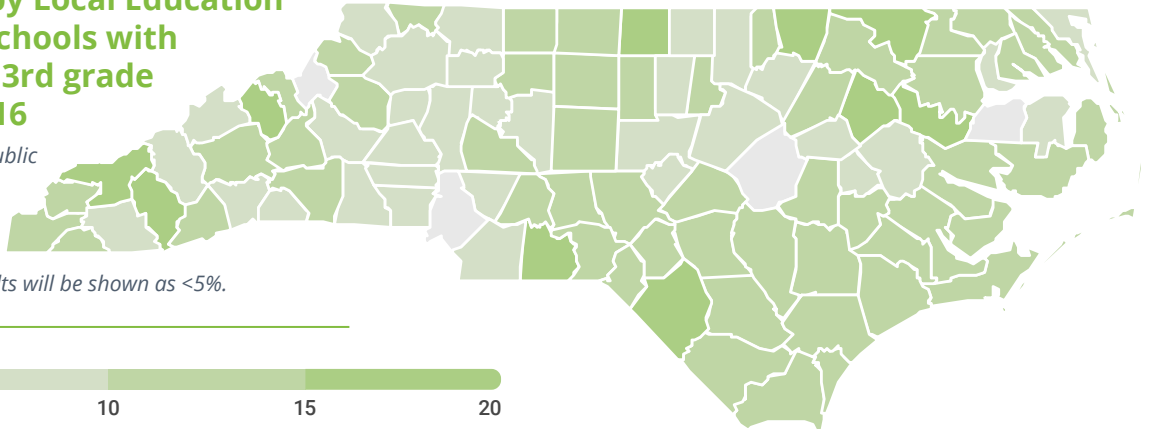
In North Carolina in 2015/16 (the most recent year of data), 11 percent of elementary school students were chronically absent, which is consistent with the national rate.⁴ There are disparities by race/ethnicity.

American Indian/Alaska Native Students



Chronic Absence by Local Education Agency (LEA) for schools with K, 1st, 2nd and/or 3rd grade students. 2015-2016

Note: Per NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) policy, in any group where the percentage of individuals is less than 5%, the actual values may not be displayed, and the results will be shown as <5%.



District-by-district data are available on NCECF's website at <https://buildthefoundation.org/issue/regular-school-attendance/>.

Rates vary significantly by school district, as shown on the map above. Nearly three out of every four Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in North Carolina had from five to 15 percent of their elementary-school students chronically absent. *Experts at the national organization Attendance Works say that chronic absence rates under about five percent are likely due to data collection, analysis or reporting errors.*

NORTH CAROLINA STATE-LEVEL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

In the summer of 2018, the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) released an update of our report, *AttendaNCe Counts: Chronic Absence in North Carolina*. It shares the most recent data available on chronic absence in the early grades and assesses where North Carolina is on state-level policies, practices and infrastructure proven to support school attendance. The report is available online at: <https://buildthefoundation.org/resource/attendance-counts/>

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

This report aims to bring attention to *district-level* policies and practices. Attendance Works, a national initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance, provides a self-assessment tool that school districts can use to evaluate their policies and practices around attendance. Attendance Works suggests that the tool be used to:

- Gain a deeper understanding into what is and what could be happening in the district to improve regular attendance.
- Lay the foundation for a team of stakeholders to begin collaborating to reduce chronic absence in the district.

To better understand current attendance policies and practices in districts across the state, NCECF partnered with graduate students at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy to survey districts, based on the Attendance Works district self-assessment, and analyze their approaches to attendance policy and practice. Fifty-five of North Carolina's 115 school districts completed the survey, and their data is included here. *See Appendix B for the list of responding districts, along with information comparing the responding districts to the state as a whole.*

The survey prompted districts to consider their policies and practices in four areas:

- **Actionable Data** assesses the effectiveness of attendance data collection, reporting, analysis and use by districts, schools and families.
- **Positive Engagement** measures the degree to which school districts use positive messaging and engagement to educate families and other stakeholders about regular attendance and intervene promptly when necessary.
- **Shared Accountability** asks whether strategic plans are in place around regular attendance at the community, district, school and individual student levels.
- **Strategic Partnerships** assesses how school districts collaborate with community partners to better understand and address chronic absence.

Districts were asked to rank their attendance policies and practices in each of these areas as:

- **Strength**
- **OK for Now**
- **Could Be Better**
- **Urgent Gap**
- **Don't Know**

Actionable Data

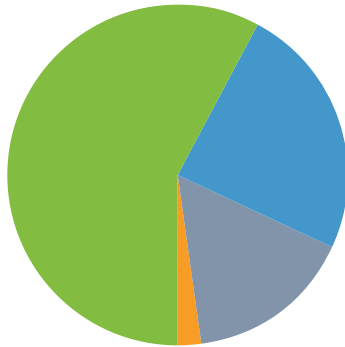
Attendance data analyzed on the district, grade, school, sub-population, and zip code levels can be used by schools and districts to better understand the populations most affected by chronic absence. To be actionable, data must be entered accurately at the classroom level, analyzed consistently at the school- and district-levels, and communicated clearly to schools, district staff and families.

It is important to note that data by themselves do not answer questions, but they can drive inquiry to better understand the factors contributing to chronic absence in schools and districts. Informed by these inquiries, schools and districts can make decisions about activities and investments.

The majority of responding districts feel fairly confident about the accuracy of their districts' data entry and ability to make it accessible to families. They are less positive about how the districts and schools are analyzing and using chronic absence data—between one-third and one-half of respondents rate data analysis and data use as either “could be better” or an “urgent gap.”

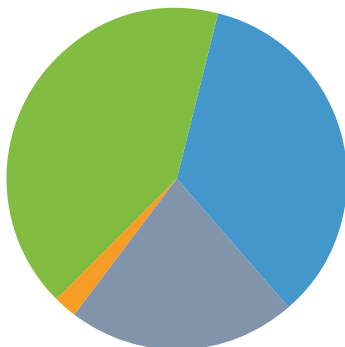
- **Data Entry.** Attendance data is entered accurately on a daily basis for each student into an electronic database.

58% • Strength
24% • Ok for now
16% • Could be better
2% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



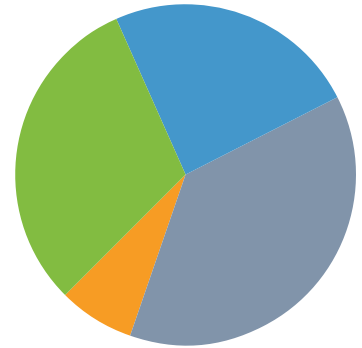
- **Data Accessibility.** Students and parents can access their attendance data in a format that is easy to understand and shows if the student is at risk due to chronic absence.

42% • Strength
35% • Ok for now
22% • Could be better
2% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



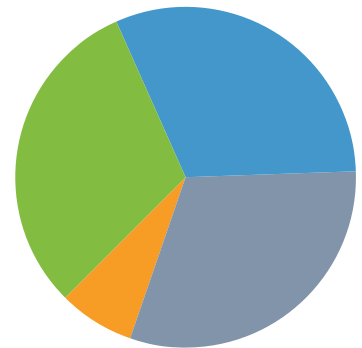
- **Data Analysis.** Data on levels of chronic absence are calculated (ideally at least monthly) for district as a whole as well as by grade, school, student sub-population and, if possible, by zip code.

31% • Strength
24% • Ok for now
38% • Could be better
7% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



- **Data Use.** School site teams and a district team use monthly data on current level of chronic absence, by school and grade. School teams receive a list of students who missed 10% or more of school.

31% • Strength
31% • Ok for now
31% • Could be better
7% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



There have been recent policy changes at the state and federal levels around chronic absence data.

- **New state definition of chronic absence.** In February 2018, North Carolina's State Board of Education adopted the state's first-ever definition of chronic absence. The new definition is consistent with the federal definition, which defines chronic absence as missing more than 10 percent of enrolled school days in a given year.
- **New federal reporting requirements.** The new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires all states to report on chronic absence.

Critical Questions for Actionable Data:

- How could a consistent, statewide definition of chronic absence and a new federal reporting requirement bring more attention to this metric at the district level and improve chronic absence data collection, analysis and use?
- How could districts leverage the establishing of a new definition of chronic absence to review and tighten their attendance data collection and analysis protocols?
- Are there further steps the State Board of Education and the NC Department of Public Instruction could take to support districts to collect and analyze data more accurately?

Positive Engagement

Interventions that treat absenteeism as a problem to be solved by addressing the barriers to attendance in partnership with families and communities are more effective than approaches that treat absenteeism as a behavior to be punished.

Positive family engagement means learning from parents what barriers to attendance they face, and also educating families on why going to school every day matters and what they can do to make it happen. Often families do not know that missing just two days of school a month can negatively affect their children's learning, and that even children as young as preschoolers and kindergarteners can be impacted by chronic absence. Schools and districts often do not understand the drivers of chronic absence—including daily obstacles that parents face in getting their children to school—and therefore cannot act to change those drivers. Critical family engagement elements to improving regular attendance for young students include:

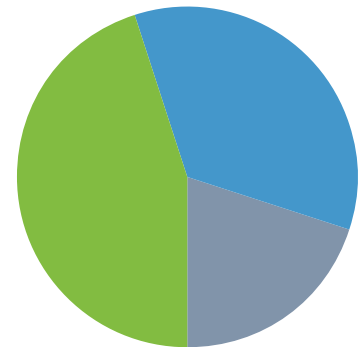
- Positive, universal messaging about the importance of regular school attendance.
- Trainings for parents on what they can do to reduce absence
- Learning from families to better understand and eliminate barriers to regular attendance.
- Prompt outreach to families when chronic absence starts to become a problem.
- Publicly recognizing success stories—whether at the individual child and family level, or at the classroom or school-level.

Most North Carolina districts are less confident in their engagement with families than they are about their data collection and analysis. About half of districts consider that they are strong at messaging about the importance of regular attendance and reaching out to families when signs of chronic absence are detected.

Districts report doing an okay job of recognizing positive examples of improved attendance and using those examples to spur further action. About one-third rate that as a “strength” and another one-third rank it “ok for now.” Districts do not feel that they do a good job providing trainings for families on why attendance matters and what parents can do. Only one in ten districts consider that a strength, and the same number consider it an urgent gap.

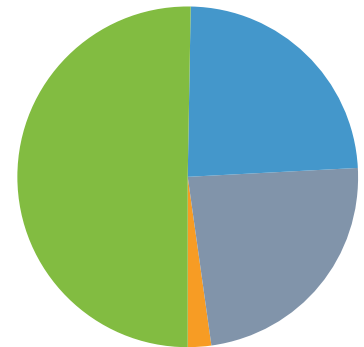
- **Messaging.** The district clearly and consistently conveys messages about the importance of daily attendance in communications with parents, the general public, and other key stakeholders.

45% • Strength
35% • Ok for now
20% • Could be better
0% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



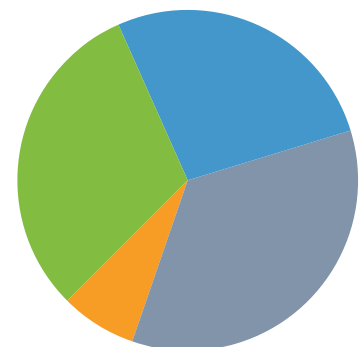
- **Family Outreach.** Someone reaches out to the family in a positive way as soon as signs of chronic absence are detected.

51% • Strength
24% • Ok for now
24% • Could be better
2% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



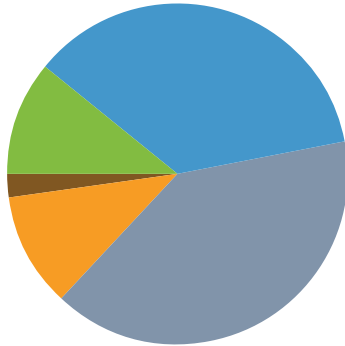
- **Recognition.** We recognize positive examples of students, families, teachers, schools, and community partners improving attendance and use these examples to inspire action and identify best practices.

31% • Strength
27% • Ok for now
35% • Could be better
7% • Urgent gap
0% • Don't know



- **Parent Trainings.** Parents can access trainings, in their home languages, on why attendance matters and what parents can do.

11% • *Strength*
 36% • *Ok for now*
 40% • *Could be better*
 11% • *Urgent gap*
 2% • *Don't know*



State legislative and administrative leaders have recently expressed an interest in strengthening state and local attendance awareness activities.

- **State Superintendent launches NC Reads.** The Department of Public Instruction State Superintendent is focusing on attendance in NC Reads. The NC Reads initiative has four goals for preschoolers and elementary students, including promoting regular attendance.
- **Legislature encourages attendance recognition programs.** The NC General Assembly passed a bill during the 2018 short session encouraging school districts to adopt student attendance recognition programs to “promote student attendance in school and participation in class as an integral part of academic achievement and the learning process.”

Critical Questions for Positive Engagement:

- *How could attention from state-level leaders on raising awareness about the importance of regular school attendance spur action at the district/ community level?*
- *How could districts and/or local communities echo state-level calls for raising public awareness and engagement on this topic?*
- *What do districts need to engage in awareness activities?*

Shared Accountability

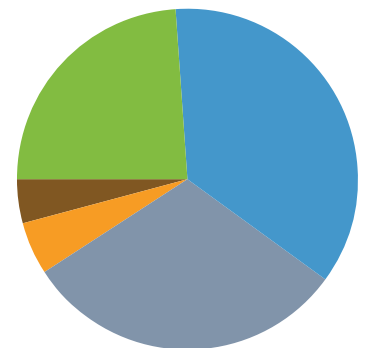
What gets measured is what gets done. Setting goals, making attendance a priority and building attendance metrics into accountability systems at the district, school and student levels are needed steps to realize better outcomes. Shared accountability can help district and school leaders see where

additional support is needed. Reviewing data regularly with community stakeholders can lead to regular attendance being viewed as a community-wide goal and a create a sense of shared responsibility for reaching that goal.

Districts report lower ratings for shared accountability than for data collection and analysis and family engagement. One-quarter of districts report that they are strong at setting attendance goals, with another one-third reporting “Ok for Now.” Fewer than one in five districts report schools having attendance improvement plans as a strength. A handful of districts report these two items as “urgent gaps.” Districts are even less confident about their processes to review and discuss absence data with community stakeholders—nearly one in five says it’s an urgent gap, and fewer than that consider it a strength. Districts report similar numbers when asked whether students with histories of chronic absence have attendance improvement plans, with most responses coming in as “Ok for Now” (24%) or “Could be Better” (45%).

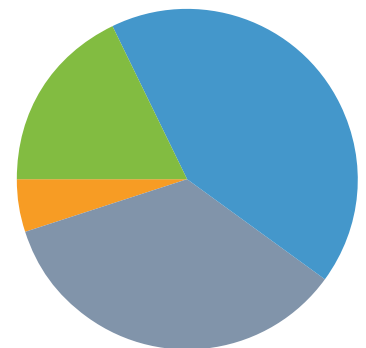
- **Attendance Goals.** The district establishes annual goals for improving attendance and lowering chronic absence.

24% • *Strength*
 36% • *Ok for now*
 31% • *Could be better*
 5% • *Urgent gap*
 4% • *Don't know*



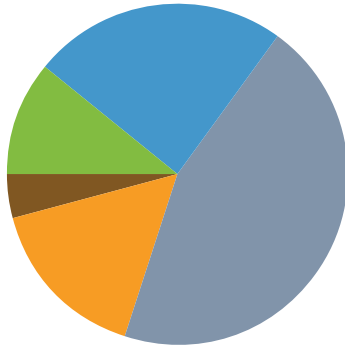
- **School-Level Improvement Plans.** Each school has a school improvement plan, including chronic absence and attendance data, targets for improvement, and the collaboration with community partners to maintain or improve attendance through a tiered approach.

18% • *Strength*
 42% • *Ok for now*
 35% • *Could be better*
 5% • *Urgent gap*
 0% • *Don't know*



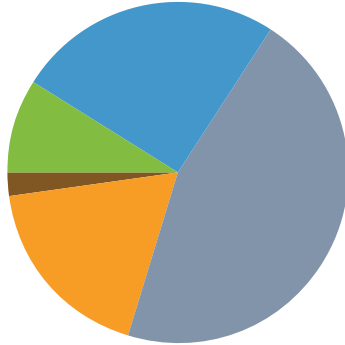
- **Student-Level Improvement Plans.** Every student with a history of chronic absence has an attendance improvement plan.

11% • Strength
24% • Ok for now
45% • Could be better
16% • Urgent gap
4% • Don't know



- **Shared Data Review.** District and community stakeholders meet regularly to review chronic absence data in the context of other student, school, and community data.

9% • Strength
25% • Ok for now
45% • Could be better
18% • Urgent gap
2% • Don't know



While North Carolina state leaders have established a statewide definition for chronic absence and called for greater awareness and engagement around regular attendance, they have stopped short of requiring the state, districts and/or schools to use regular attendance as an accountability metric. Three out of four states nationwide chose chronic absence as an accountability metric in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plans. It is an early warning indicator that can reveal a student needs help before test scores do, and it can drive attention and resources towards younger students (preschool through second grade) for whom test scores are not an appropriate accountability metric.

Critical Questions for Shared Accountability:

- *As chronic absence data collection and analysis improves, could North Carolina begin including chronic absence as an accountability metric for federal laws like ESSA and on school report cards—particularly as an early warning and to drive attention to the youngest students?*

- *Districts create their own ESSA plans. Could innovative districts choose to focus on chronic absence as a district-level accountability metric for the youngest students?*
- *How could districts support schools in having school- and student-level attendance improvement plans?*
- *What supports do districts need to engage community stakeholders and create shared investment in improving outcomes?*

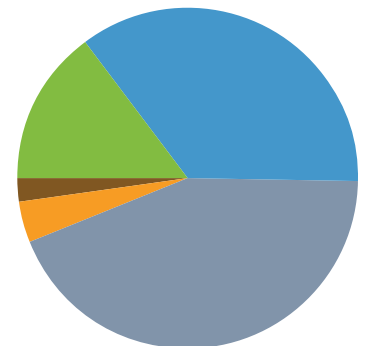
Strategic Partnerships

Chronic absence is a community challenge that requires a community-wide solution. Districts and schools cannot be held solely responsible for improving regular attendance. School systems often do not have budgeted resources or capacity to address many of the critical barriers to regular attendance, like health problems, neighborhood safety and housing insecurity. Attendance can improve when trusted community partners help raise awareness, address barriers, and work inside and outside the school building to impact attendance rates.

Districts rank their strategic partnerships with community stakeholders the weakest out of the four areas. Only 15 percent of districts report that they are “strong” in cross-sector community partnerships. Only 10 percent report that their ability to publicly report absence data and share it with community partners is a strength, and the same number consider it an urgent gap. More than half of districts report that the availability of materials and training to support community partners in learning about and engaging in building regular attendance “could be better,” and about one in six consider it an urgent gap. Most districts report that contracts or MOUs are not in place with community partners around attendance improvement—nearly half say it “could be better,” and one in four considers it an urgent gap.

- **Cross-Sector Approach:** Schools and community partners take a cross-sector approach to build a positive culture of attendance through student and family engagement, and recognition of good attendance.

15% • Strength
36% • Ok for now
44% • Could be better
4% • Urgent gap
2% • Don't know



- **Data Sharing:** Data on chronic absence are publicly reported annually (if not more often) and available to families and community partners, including health providers.

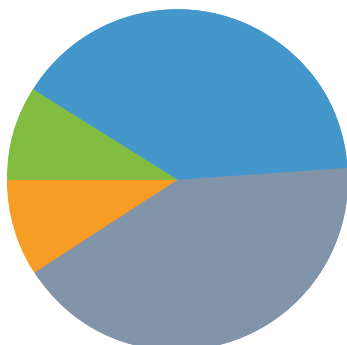
9% • Strength

40% • Ok for now

42% • Could be better

9% • Urgent gap

0% • Don't know



- **Partner Education:** Professional development and materials are available to help community partners understand attendance practice, build a culture of attendance, develop tiered interventions and engage in positive messaging and early outreach.

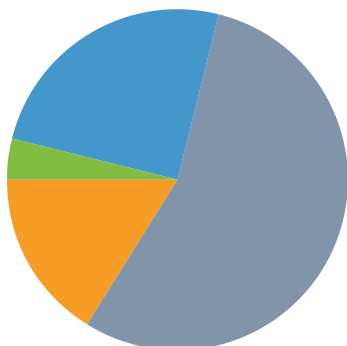
4% • Strength

25% • Ok for now

55% • Could be better

16% • Urgent gap

0% • Don't know



- **Agreements in Place:** Contracts or MOUs are in place with community stakeholders to share data, provide support, and assess contributions.

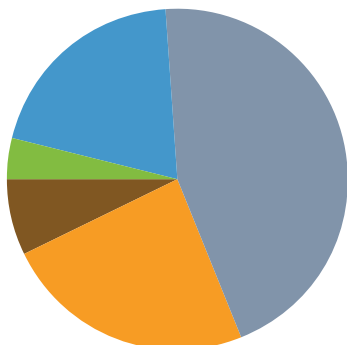
4% • Strength

20% • Ok for now

45% • Could be better

24% • Urgent gap

7% • Don't know



North Carolina state leaders are recognizing the importance of cross-sector, community-wide approaches to education, particularly for the youngest children. Examples include:

- **The B-3 Interagency Council**, established in legislation in 2017, aims to build a birth-through-third-grade, cross-sector education system for the state.
- **Whole Child NC**, established in 2018 by the State Board of Education, is an Interagency Advisory Committee tasked with identifying and reviewing the challenges of poverty, safety, health and other non-academic barriers on school-aged children. The Committee will make recommendations as to how best to facilitate access for all public school children to receive the opportunity for a sound basic education.
- **Early Childhood Advisory Council**, re-instituted by Governor Cooper in 2018, provides leadership in the development of a premiere early learning and development system for children birth to age eight. Members of the Council include experts from a wide range of early childhood fields, from early education to healthcare, and from social entrepreneurs to consumers of early childhood services.
- **NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading (Pathways)** is taking a whole-child, birth-through-age-eight approach to improving third grade reading proficiency as a proxy for overall child well-being. Pathways Partners have prioritized attention on regular school attendance. Pathways is an initiative of the NC Early Childhood Foundation, in collaboration with NC Child, the NC Partnership for Children, and BEST NC.

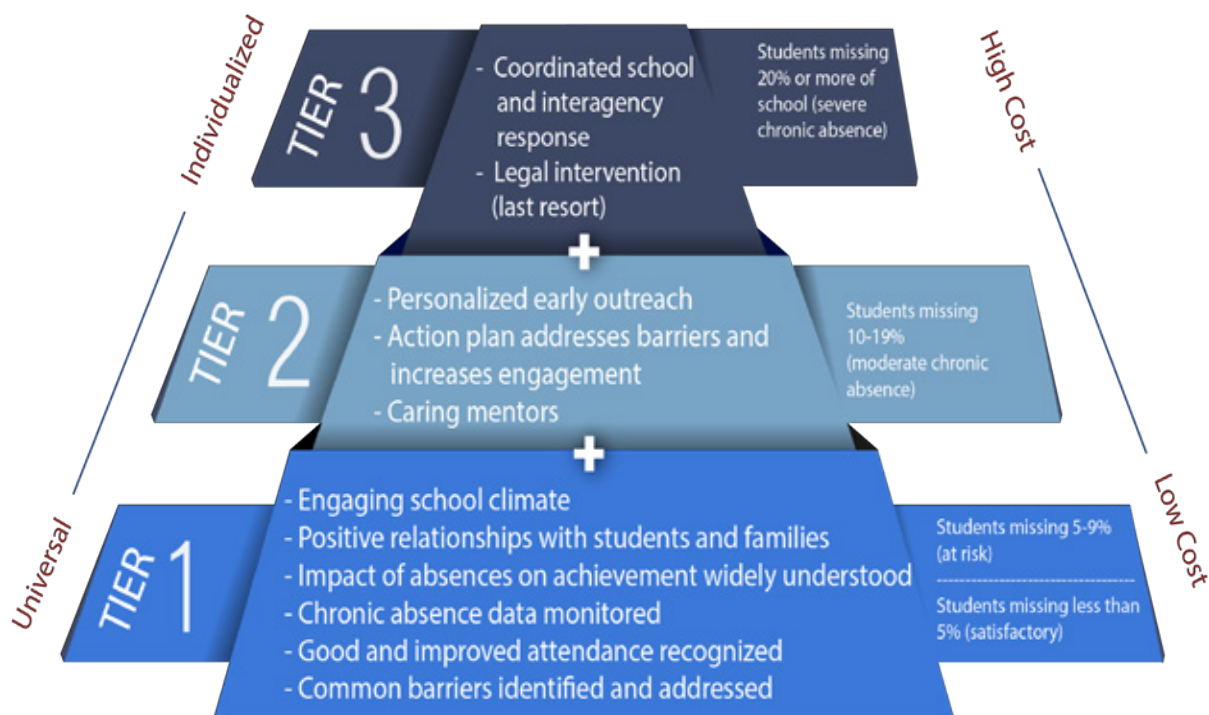
Critical Questions for Strategic Partnerships:

- *How can these new state-level collaborative working groups support districts' work on chronic absence, using a whole-child approach?*
- *How can state-level policy or funding support community stakeholder investment in district-led attendance efforts?*
- *How can community-level partners support districts in improving regular attendance?*
- *What can districts do to invite community partners into the conversation?*
- *What do districts need to support these partners in community engagement?*

WHAT CAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITIES DO?

1. School districts can create data collection and analysis protocols to improve the accuracy of chronic absence data.
2. Districts who have not yet done so can complete the School District Administrators' Attendance Works self-assessment: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/district_chronic_absence
3. Communities and districts can use the [Attendance Works Action Planning Tool](#) to co-create a systematic, community-wide plan to improve regular school attendance. Effective attendance improvement plans often use the three tiers of intervention—Tier 1 offers universal strategies to improve attendance, Tier 2 provides early intervention and Tier 3 offers intensive support to children facing the greatest challenges in getting to school regularly.
4. Communities partners such as local [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) communities, PTAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries and elected officials—to name a few—can help implement local plans to improve regular school attendance.

TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE



Source: Attendance Works.

Take the District Self-Assessment!

We invited school districts across the state to take a survey about their attendance policies and practices based on the Attendance Works' district self-assessment. This report analyzes the feedback from 58 out of North Carolina's 115 school districts. You can add your districts' information and compare your policies and practices with those from across the state.

1. See the Appendix to find out if your school district has already taken the survey.
2. Are you a district representative? Visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/district_chronic_absence to take the survey.
3. Are you a community partner? Share this report and the survey link with your school district and ask them to take the survey.

PROSPECT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN **UNION COUNTY TACKLES CHRONIC ABSENCE**

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

In 2014, Prospect Elementary School in Union County, NC had a chronic absence rate that was slightly higher than the state average. Administrators and staff were tasked with taking an active role in identifying children who were chronically absent and engaging families to understand barriers to attendance. As a result, their chronic absence rate fell from 12 to six percent in four years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Prospect Elementary School serves close to 500 students per year. The 2017-18 student body was five percent African American, less than one percent American Indian/Alaska native, 10 percent Hispanic, three percent multiracial, and 81 percent white. Prospect Elementary is a Title I school, and half of the students receive free or reduced price lunch.

CHALLENGE

Prospect Elementary School had a 12 percent chronic absence rate in 2014. Kindergarteners were most at-risk for chronic absence. The school identified minor health issues and custody disputes between geographically dispersed parents as important local contributors to chronic absence.

GETTING TO ACTION

Prospect Elementary put in place a three-pronged plan to address chronic absence, involving multiple school staff members:

- Improve chronic absence data analysis and use.
- Address family awareness and engagement around attendance issues.
- Reward students who have excellent attendance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND USE

Prospect Elementary's attendance counselor began providing a daily attendance report to the principal. The assistant principal enters the data into a data dashboard created by the school. The school data manager monitors kindergarten attendance daily and other grade levels weekly. The assistant principal maintains data on students designated as chronically absent and monitors their attendance.

FAMILY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

An electronic daily attendance message is sent home for any absent student. The school calls the homes of absent kindergarten students to determine the reason for absence. Administrators and the school attendance counselor meet with parents each time a student reaches 10 unexcused absences. A letter is sent to parents when a student reaches three, six and 10 unexcused absences. During the 2017-18 school year, the school made an effort to call or touch base with parents of kindergarten students if they missed excessive days.

Once a student is considered chronically absent, administrators meet with the family to develop a plan and begin home visits if the absences continue. If transportation is an issue, the principal and counselor go to the home to assist with getting the child to school. If health is causing chronic absence, the school and parents work together to ensure children have access to care. School nurses are available to parents twice a week to provide health assessments. In the case of custody issues, the school has mediated conversations between estranged parents.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Prospect Elementary conducts awards ceremonies each grading period to reward students with perfect attendance.

RESULTS

Between 2014 and 2018, Prospect Elementary School has been able to halve its chronic absence rate—from 12 percent to just over six percent.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE IN FORSYTH COUNTY INCREASES KINDERGARTEN ATTENDANCE

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

All North Carolina kindergarten students must have a health assessment and required vaccinations to attend school. By state law, if these forms are not completed by the 30th day of the academic year, kindergarteners may not attend school. The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (the district) were concerned about the high numbers of their kindergarteners being excluded from school—sometimes for months—because they did not have the required health forms on file. In response, the district worked with partners to organize a Community Collaborative initiative that was able to support families and dramatically improve attendance. Strategies included educating local early childhood program providers, medical providers, and parents about the health requirements, and increasing access to medical appointments through local school-based health clinics and other community providers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The district includes 81 schools, including 43 elementary schools, serving more than 54,000 students per year. The 2017-18 student body was 29 percent African American, less than one percent American Indian/native Hawaiian, three percent Asian, 25 percent Hispanic, four percent multiracial, and 40 percent white.

CHALLENGE

In 2013, by the 30th day of school, 333 kindergarten students were not allowed to attend school because the district did not have their required health forms. Some of these exclusions were lasting through November or December. The district decided to act.

GETTING TO ACTION

Working with the district, the School Health Alliance for Forsyth County (the Alliance) and the local School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) developed a Community Collaborative (the Collaborative) and a systems approach to reduce the number of kindergarteners excluded from school. The Collaborative was able to reduce kindergarten school exclusions each of the next four years.

2014

The School Health Alliance for Forsyth County is a local partner that operates school-based health clinics and programs for the district. As part of the Collaborative, the Alliance provided mobile health clinics and services through a brick and mortar school-based health clinic to increase access to health assessments and immunizations for local students and families. These services began to reduce the number of school exclusions. By 2014, the Collaborative had grown to also include the Forsyth County Department of Public Health and one of the largest local pediatric medical practices.

2015

The Northwest Community Care Network (NCCN), a network of doctors who manage the health care of Medicaid recipients, joined the Collaborative. With NCCN's support, the Collaborative launched community education efforts that included:

- Calling families of all Medicaid-eligible rising kindergarteners to ensure that they were aware of school health form requirements and connect them with health care providers.
- Educating community medical providers about the medical form issue and engaging providers in identifying solutions, such as establishing a direct fax line for the medical providers to return forms to the school.
- Engaging the media to increase awareness about the health assessment requirements and resources available to assist families.

In addition, Forsyth County Department of Public Health nurses began intentionally reaching out to students during the summer months to ensure that the health requirements were met. The Alliance continued to offer mobile medical clinics during the summer and medical appointments during the school year for any student in the district. These combined community efforts further reduced kindergarten exclusions.

2016

A change in state law provided an opportunity for the Collaborative to re-engage partners regarding the new requirements. Education efforts included:

- Collaborative members attending the community-wide kindergarten enrollment event.
- Ensuring kindergarten registration events included information about the health assessment and vaccination requirement.
- Presentations to medical providers about the new requirements.

In addition, the district started tracking students who had not turned in their forms by 10 days prior to the due date. The Collaborative asked the local medical community to extend hours and open weekend clinics to help address the need for timely medical assessments.

2017

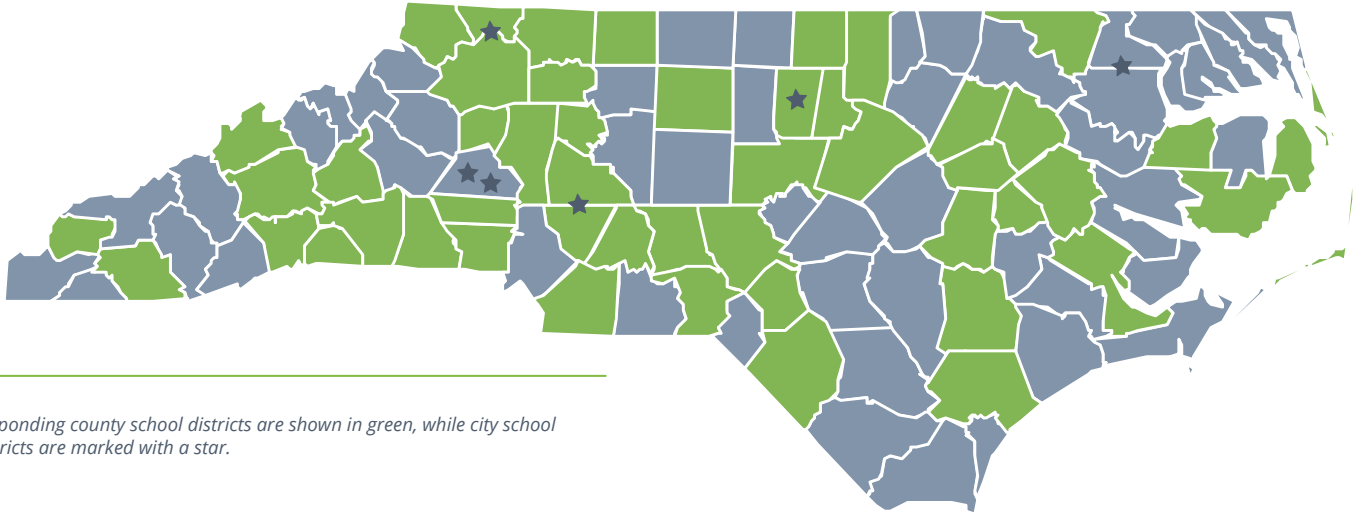
The Collaborative recognized that schools needed a consistent submission and tracking process for health forms. In addition, the Collaborative secured a small grant to establish a transportation fund that can assist families for whom transportation to clinical appointments is a barrier.

RESULTS

The Collaborative was able to drastically reduce the number of kindergarten school exclusions in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. In 2017, only 70 kindergarten students—down from 333 in 2013—were excluded from school because of missing health forms. This represents nearly an 80 percent reduction in kindergarten school exclusions since the project began.

APPENDIX: SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey analysis is based on 55 unique district responses. The responding districts were representative of the state as a whole in their percentage of economically disadvantaged students, their chronic absence rates, and their spending per pupil. Their median percentage of black students was slightly lower than the state average and their median percentage of white students was slightly higher than the state average. Eastern North Carolina was underrepresented.



Responding county school districts are shown in green, while city school districts are marked with a star.

Alexander County Schools
 Alleghany County Schools
 Ashe County Schools
 Buncombe County Schools
 Cabarrus County Schools
 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
 Chatham County Schools
 Cleveland County Schools
 Craven County Schools
 Dare County Schools
 Davie County Schools
 Duplin County Schools
 Durham Public Schools
 Edenton-Chowan Schools
 Edgecombe County Public Schools
 Elkin City Schools
 Gaston County Schools
 Graham County Schools
 Granville County Schools
 Greene County Schools
 Guilford County Schools
 Henderson County Schools
 Hickory Public Schools
 Hoke County Schools
 Hyde County Schools
 Iredell-Statesville Schools
 Kannapolis City Schools
 Lincoln County Schools

Macon County Schools
 Madison County Schools
 McDowell County Schools
 Montgomery County Schools
 Moore County Schools
 Newton-Conover Schools
 Northampton County Schools
 Nash-Rocky Mount Schools
 Orange County Schools
 Pender County Schools
 Person County Schools
 Pitt County Schools
 Polk County Schools
 Public Schools of Robeson County
 Richmond County Schools
 Rowan-Salisbury Schools
 Rutherford County Schools
 Stanly County Schools
 Stokes County Schools
 Surry County Schools
 Union County Public Schools
 Wake County Public School System
 Washington County Schools
 Wayne County Public Schools
 Wilkes County Schools
 Wilson County Schools
 Yadkin County Schools

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The NC Early Childhood Foundation promotes understanding, spearheads collaboration, and advances policies to ensure each North Carolina child is on track for lifelong success by the end of third grade.

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