

February 6, 2026

Dear Jessica,

Thank you for your inquiry about what Attendance Works has learned about a) the frequency with which data on chronic absence should be publicly reported and b) how long students should be enrolled in order to be included in chronic absence calculations. My responses to both of these questions draw heavily on [**More Essential Than Ever: States Taking Action To Improve Attendance**](#), our fifth annual examination of state attendance data, policy, and practices.

a. How often should chronic absence data be publicly reported?

Chronic absence is a critical indicator of student success and should be publicly reported on a consistent basis and always be disaggregated by district, school, grade and student group. Similar to academic and discipline data, when chronic absence data is publicly available, it highlights both where there is a challenge and who is disproportionately impacted by chronic absence. Additionally, public sharing promotes shared accountability among families, educators, community partners and policymakers, spurring action.

At present, most states publish data at least annually, typically after the school year has closed out. A more action-oriented approach is to calculate and publish chronic absence data throughout the school year. When states do this, leaders at both the state and local levels have the opportunity to deploy strategies and interventions that will move the needle in real time.

We have seen examples of states who have moved in this direction and have seen positive results. For example, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) shifted to monthly reporting. This report [**Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut**](#), shares how these monthly reports allowed Connecticut to realize early on that chronic absence had spiked during the pandemic. As a result, Gov. Ned Lamont and CSDE established the [**Learner Engagement and Attendance Program \(LEAP\)**](#) which resulted in significant reductions in chronic absence.

More recently, in SY 2024–25, monthly reports alerted CSDE that chronic absence rates in February were higher than the prior year. Alarmed by this increase, CSDE moved quickly to publicize the issue and investigate contributing factors. This rapid response enabled CSDE, local districts, and community partners to address increases in respiratory illness and

concerns related to intensified immigration enforcement; efforts that successfully reduced chronic absence by the end of the school year.

To date, four states share data publicly prior to the end of the school year. Rhode Island's [**Student Attendance Leaderboard**](#) shows real-time data, with the number of students chronically absent by school. Updated monthly, [**Connecticut's Attendance Dashboard**](#) offers a comprehensive array of data on chronic absence and attendance rates overall and broken down by grade and student group. Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts both release reports in the spring offering insights about progress to date for the current school year. We have heard additional states are contemplating how to move in this direction.

b. How long should students be enrolled in order to be included in chronic absence calculations?

Students should be included in chronic absence calculations as soon as they are enrolled for 10 days. This provides some flexibility, while ensuring students experiencing high mobility are included. For example, students experiencing homelessness are more likely to change districts throughout the school year. By holding a low, but reasonable enrollment threshold, districts can still identify at-risk students and address attendance needs.

Currently, ED Facts uses the 10 day threshold when collecting data at the federal level. Currently 23 states use the federal guidance and include students after they have been enrolled 10 days. Adopting this same definition helps to ensure comparability in definitions across states. It is important to acknowledge that one challenge associated with a shorter enrollment requirement is that a student can be reported as chronically absent in more than one district for the same school year. While this increases accountability for addressing the needs of highly mobile student populations it can slightly elevate chronic absence counts statewide.

I hope these responses are helpful. Happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Hedy Chang
Chief Executive Officer
Attendance Works