# Protocol for Examining Monthly Attendance Data

## Purpose:

This document describes a protocol for exploring the monthly attendance data released by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The protocol offers five steps to progressively drill deeper into the data

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For steps 2 through 5 (data review steps), try to make some observations as to why the data are the way they are, and what if anything about the data surprises you.

## Step 1: Understand the metrics (5 minutes – quiet reading)

There are two metrics for reporting attendance: Attendance rates and chronic absence rates.

See sample school below with five students.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Days in Attendance | Days of Membership | Attendance Rate | Chronically Absent? |
| Student A | 70 | 70 | 100.0 | No |
| Student B | 54 | 60 | 90.0 | Yes |
| Student C | 60 | 70 | 85.7 | Yes |
| Student D | 64 | 72 | 88.9 | Yes |
| Student E | 65 | 70 | 92.9 | No |
| School Total | **313** | **342** | **91.5** | **3/5 = 60%** |

**Attendance rate** is the total number of attendance days divided by the total number of membership days. The school’s attendance rate of 91.5 is the total number of attendance days (313) divided by the total number of membership days (342). On average, students miss nearly 1 out of every 10 days. When calculating attendance rate for a school or student group, the days of membership and attendance stay with the school.

**Chronic absence** is calculated at the student level. A student is said to be chronically absent if they attend 90% or fewer available school days. In the example above, students B, C, and D are chronically absent. The school’s chronic absenteeism rate is 3 out of 5 or 60%. When a student moves from one school to another, their status as chronically absent is calculated for all their recorded attendance in Connecticut across all schools, and then assigned to their current school. **Extreme Chronic absence** is defined as attending 25% or fewer available school days.

## Step 2: Overall and Subgroup Attendance Rates (5 minutes)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Data** | **Your Notes  *(observations and surprises)*** |
| What is the overall district attendance rate, year to date, in 2021-22? How does that compare with 2020-21 and 2019-20? | Open excel file [Attendance Rates for State and Districts, Student Groups by tab (.xlsx)](https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/0221_AttRate_District_Suppressed_January_2022_20220215.xlsx)  Auto filter for your district.  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises  Navigate to other tabs to view specific subgroups of students |  |
| Which subgroups of students reflect substantially lower attendance in 2021-22 as compared to 2020-20 and 2019-20? |  |
| Which schools reflect substantially lower attendance in 2021-22 as compared to 2020-2021 and 2019-20? | Open excel file [Attendance Rates for Schools (.xlsx)](https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/0231_AttRate_School_Suppressed_January_2022_20220215.xlsx)  Auto filter for your district.  Review attendance rates for your schools.  Make notes. |  |

## Step 3: High Needs Crosstabs and Grade (10 minutes)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Data** | **Your Notes  *(observations and surprises)*** |
| Among high-needs students, are there particular groups of students who seem to be reflecting poor attendance in 2021-2022?  Why might that be so? | Go back to the file [Attendance Rates for State and Districts, Student Groups by tab (.xlsx)](https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/0221_AttRate_District_Suppressed_January_2022_20220215.xlsx)  go to the **By\_HighNeedsCrossTabs** tab.  Auto filter for your district. This will give you high needs data broken out for each of the different crosstabs.  See table below to understand the crosstabs  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises |  |
| Are there particular grades in which students are reflecting weaker attendance in 2021-22?  Why might that be so? | Switch to the **By\_Grade** tab. Again, filter by district.  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Column Name | Value | Student Group |
| FRL Flag | 1 | Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals |
| FRLType | N | Students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals |
| FRLType | R | Students eligible for reduced-price meals |
| FRLType | F | Students eligible for free meals |
| ELFlag | 1 | Students who are English Learners |
| SpEdFlag | 1 | Students with disabilities |

* + When the high needs groups are presented by crosstabs, the sub groups are mutually exclusive; for example the group with

FRLType = R, ELFLag = 0 and SpEDFlag = 1

represents students with disabilities who get reduced-price lunch but are not English learners.

## Step 4: EL and SWD by Grade Range (5 minutes)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Data** | **Your Notes  *(observations and surprises)*** |
| How does the attendance of English learners vary by grade? | Switch to the **By\_GradeBand\_EL** sheet  Auto filter for your district. This will give you attendance rates for English learners by grade band.  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises |  |
| How does the attendance of students with disabilities vary by grade? | Switch to **By\_GradeBand\_SWD** sheet.  Auto filter for your district. This will give you attendance rates for students with disabilities by grade band.  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises |  |

## Step 5: District Chronic Absence and Extreme Chronic Absence (5 minutes)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Data** | **Your Notes  *(observations and surprises)*** |
| How many students are chronically absent?  How many are extremely chronically absent?  How does this compare with overall attendance rates?  What percent of days are students spending in person? (InPersonMemRate)  What is the attendance rate for in-person days? (InPersonAttRate)  What is the attendance rate for remote days  (RemoteAttRate)  \*Note, if fewer than 20 students have remote days then this information is suppressed | Open file [Chronic Absence Rates and Remote Attendance Information for State and Districts, Student Groups by tab (.xlsx)](https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/0222_InPerRemote_District_Suppressed_January_2022_20220215.xlsx)  Auto filter for your district.  Review the data.  Explore Connecticut as a whole and other districts.  Make notes, particularly any surprises  Navigate to other tabs to view information for different student groups. |  |