



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays

Student Attendance, Engagement, and Support Series

September 21, 2021

Please [sign-in](#) using the chat - include your name, title, district/school or agency.

Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with SERC



***Notice: This meeting is
being recorded.***

Agenda

1. Welcome

- ★ Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE
- ★ Stephen Proffitt, Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design, SERC

2. What's New at CSDE and Partners

3. Frequently Asked Questions 2021-21

Kari Sullivan Custer



4. Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Notice: This meeting is being recorded.



WHAT'S NEW AT CSDE AND PARTNERS



What's New at CSDE

September 20, 2021

- [Update - Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success](#)
- [**Eversource Hardship and Matching Payment Programs**](#)
- [DPH Established Testing Sites](#)



September 17, 2021

- [Implementation Guidance for Executive Order 13G](#)
- [Certification Resources and On-Going Flexibilities](#)
- [Resources to Implement the Flexibilities within the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 and Adopting Flexibilities for the 2021-22 School Year](#)

September 16, 2021

- [**CSDE 2020-21 Assessment Data for Families**](#)
- [Technology Planning Mastermind Group Sessions](#)
- [DPH Established Testing Sites](#)



September 13, 2021

- [CT WiZ: Connecticut's Immunization Information System](#)
- [Addendum 5: Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#)
- [Resources to Implement the Flexibilities within the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 and Adopting Flexibilities for the 2021-22 School Year](#)

September 9, 2021

- [Availability of Abbott BinaxNOW test kits limited](#)
- 2021–22 Unpaid Experiential Learning Program (UELP) meetings
 - [Register for September 20, 2021, from 2:00–3:00 p.m.](#)
 - [Register for September 24, 2021, from 9:00–10:00 a.m.](#)



Back Together this Fall

Working together, schools, families, and communities can keep students healthy, safe, and learning in person.

Recently released 2020–21 statewide student assessment data show:

- **Students who learned *in person* lost the least ground academically.** In-person students spent at least seven months in the classroom during the 2020–21 school year.
- **Students who learned *hybrid or remote* showed less academic growth.** Hybrid students were in the classroom between three and seven months of the school year. Remote students spent less than three months in the classroom.
- **Look out for your child's report!** Individual student reports will arrive at school districts in early September, and those reports will then be sent to families.

How this data is informing the 2021–22 school year:

The state test results show that students who learn *in person* are more likely to have mastered grade-level material. **School districts are committing to offer full time, in-person instruction to all students in a safe manner for the 2021–22 school year.** The tests are not being used to evaluate educators or districts.

Students with high needs — English learners, students with disabilities, and/or students from low-income families — were more likely to be remote during the 2020–21 year. A return to in-person instruction in 2021–22 is even more important for them.

How can we work together to support safe, in-person learning?

We know students learn best in person with their educators and friends. Being in person also ensures that students have access to all that schools provide — from extracurricular activities to nutritious meals.

CSDE is working closely with the Department of Public Health to provide [guidance](#) to districts so that schools are as safe as they can be. Steps being taken include

masking indoors, keeping students at least three feet apart in classrooms, hand washing, and more. Combining these layers of protection creates an effective strategy for keeping students and staff safe in school.

Families can join us in supporting safe, in-person learning by:

- **Encouraging your child to attend school in person, every day,** unless they have COVID-19 symptoms; follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidance for staying home when sick and getting tested](#).
- **Getting yourself and your children, if they are age 12 or older, vaccinated against COVID-19.** [Find a vaccine clinic in your community](#).
- **Watching for signs of stress in your children.** Try some simple and fun [activities](#) to de-stress at home, or find out what extracurricular activities are offered by your school or community. If the feelings persist, speak to your child's school counselor, pediatrician, or another medical professional.
- **Taking care of yourself.** It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Engaging in [healthy coping activities](#) relieves stress and is also good role modeling for children.
- **Continuing to practice [COVID-19 prevention strategies](#)** such as handwashing and vaccination of eligible persons.
- **Seeking out facts and information from reliable sources** such as the [CDC](#).

For more information:

[COVID-19 pandemic: Helping young children and parents transition back to school](#)

[Pandemia de COVID-19: cómo ayudar a los niños pequeños y los padres a hacer la transición para volver a la escuela](#)



Connecticut State Department of Education

[Back Together this Fall \(ct.gov\)](#)



How You Can Help Young People Who Have Experienced Trauma

Kari,

Traumatic experiences can be devastating for a child, affecting their behavioral functions like self-control and cognitive functions such as ability to learn and process. As mentors, we often work with youth who have experienced trauma either directly or indirectly. This workshop will help you learn to identify trauma in a child and strategies for mentoring a traumatized child with care and empathy. It also provides a thorough understanding of the profound neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma and violence on a child.

Date/Time:

- Tuesday, October 5, 2021
- 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Zoom Meeting

Contact Information:

Aristede Hill, Mentoring Program Manager

Aristede.Hill@PreventionworksCT.org

[Register Free!](#)

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

1. Define what it means to experience trauma
 2. Recognize ways to interact with a traumatized child with care and empathy
 3. Identify symptoms of trauma, and what it means to be trauma-informed
 4. Review ways in which a mentor can implement self-care
-

Session Outline:

- What is Trauma?
 - Fight, Flight, or Freeze?
 - What it means to be Trauma-Informed
 - Trauma Symptoms
 - Trauma Behaviors
 - How to appropriately interact with a traumatized child
 - The importance of self-care
 - Ways to take a break
-

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2021-22



Where can I find more information and Connecticut resources regarding chronic absence online?

- [Chronic Absence Webpage](#)
 - [Related Resources](#)
 - [Truancy Referral Guidance](#)
 - [Attendance Awareness Campaign](#)
 - [Talk Tuesday](#)
- [EdSight](#)
- [Superintendent's Digest](#) (updated regularly with new guidance, announcements and events)



What are Talk Tuesdays all about?

- Talk Tuesdays are a professional networking opportunity that provides district and school staff an opportunity to support each other and their work to improve student attendance and engagement.
- The objectives of Talk Tuesdays are to share lessons learned, troubleshoot common concerns and provide a community of support to each other.
- Virtual sessions are held bi-weekly and engage state agency, district and school staff in an open dialogue around student attendance and engagement during the pandemic. Next session is on October 5, 2021.
- The audience for Talk Tuesdays are targeted schools and districts (e.g., Alliance and LEAP Districts, Commissioner's Network Schools and Charter Schools);
- Participants help identify the topics for future meetings, present problems of practice, and spend time together in small group discussions.

[Learn more on the Talk Tuesday webpage!](#)



How do I stay connected to Talk Tuesday, resources and other attendance-related events?

Talk Tuesday has a new listserv that will be the primary tool for communications related to Talk Tuesday sessions as well as new attendance guidance, events and news.

- You may already be receiving emails from the listserv if your email address was on the previous email distribution lists for Talk Tuesdays.
- Feel free to share with colleagues in your district working on improving attendance and engagement with school teachers, staff, families and students.

How do I Subscribe to the SDE_Talk_Tuesday listserv?

1. Open and address a new email to: LISTSERV@list.ct.gov;
2. Remove all text from the body of your email, including your contact information;
3. Type in the body of your email: subscribe SDE_Talk_Tuesday (first name last name); and
4. Send the email.

How do I Unsubscribe to the Talk Tuesday Listserv?

1. Open and address a new email to: LISTSERV@list.ct.gov;
2. Remove all text from the body of your email, including your contact information;
3. Type in the body of your email: signoff SDE_Talk_Tuesday; and
4. Send the email.



Will the state continue to collect monthly attendance and learning model data in 2021-22

The CSDE will continue this monthly data collection in 2021-22.

- The record layout will be unchanged and the monthly due dates are expected to be similar.
- Given the attendance challenges in the 2020-21 school year, the CSDE is continuing this collection in 2021-22 because [research conducted by CSDE last year in partnership with Attendance Works](#) affirms that the odds of being chronically absent in winter were about 17 times higher for students who were chronically absent in the fall compared to those with satisfactory attendance.
- Note that during the 2021-22 school year, students who may be learning remotely in limited/individualized circumstances as outlined in [CSDE's remote learning guidance](#) can be reported as being “in attendance” through this collection.
- Districts should use the [same four-part framework](#) to track attendance for those specific students on their remote learning days.
- For questions about the data collection and reporting, please contact Kendra Shakir at Kendra.shakir@ct.gov. For questions regarding attendance and engagement practices, please contact Kari Sullivan-Custer at Kari.Sullivan@ct.gov.



Can remote learning occur and students marked “in attendance” while quarantined?

1. In 2021-22, remote learning can occur in limited, individualized cases as described in [CSDE-Guidance-The-Future-of-Remote-Learning-in-CT-Schools-07-15-21.pdf](#) . School districts are encouraged to develop a local policy to address how remote learning might be used to provide continued educational opportunities:
2. for students who must be in COVID-19 isolation or quarantine,
3. to address localized outbreaks in a school or specific school district, and
4. in rare and individualized circumstances, for students with elevated risks from COVID-19 exposure due to cohabiting family members with documented vulnerability to COVID-19.

Such policy should squarely document eligibility with equity and consistency in mind, and address the frequency and with what restrictions access will be granted.

Students who are remote in these circumstances can be deemed to be “in attendance” if they are present for at least half the school day per the [four-part framework](#); this framework is similar to the one used last year. Note that the precise nature and design of the remote programming that is offered in these rare circumstances is up to the district.



How should schools track attendance for remote learners in 2021-22?



Tracking Daily Attendance on Remote Days in 2021-22

State Board of Education Policy (2008):

"A student is considered to be 'in attendance' if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day."

A remote student can be considered as being 'in attendance' on a particular day if the total time spent on one or more of the following activities equals at least half the school day.



Synchronous virtual classes are live classes that are streamed real time to students using a videoconferencing platform like Google Meets, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.

Synchronous virtual meetings may be with a teacher, counselor, social worker, paraprofessional, etc. using a videoconferencing platform or via telephone. They may be homeroom opportunities, daily routine check-ins, or other synchronous conversations.

Time logged in electronic systems can be used to identify *any time over and above the synchronous virtual classes and meetings* that the student may have participated in during the school day.

Assignment submission/completion time can be determined by the teacher by starting with an estimate of time it will take for a typical student to submit/complete that assignment, and using that estimate to gauge the attendance time for the day that should be allotted to each student.

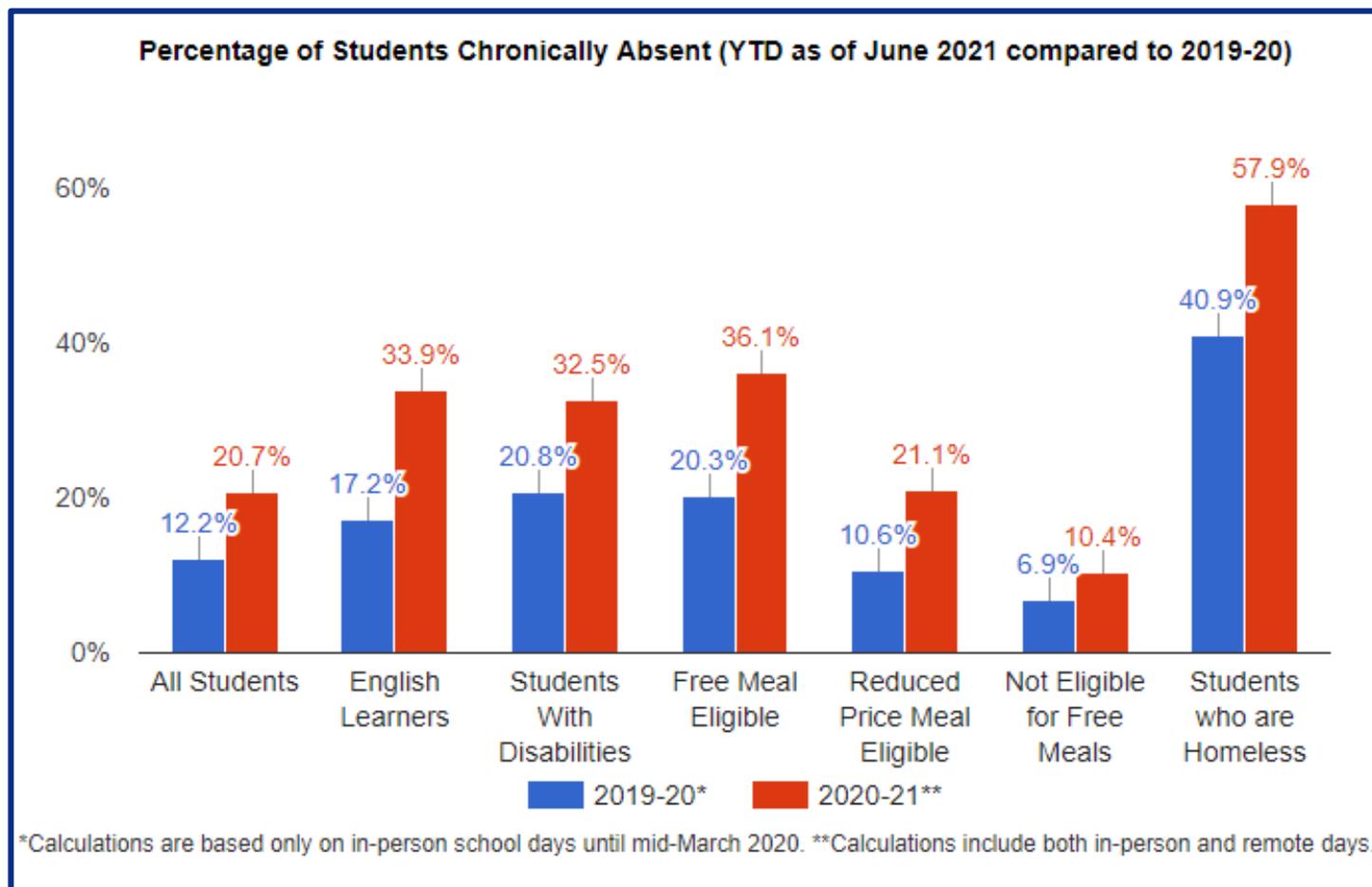
Notes:

- If a student is absent on a given day (either in-person or remote), they cannot make up for that absence on another day.
- Districts should track membership and attendance *separately* for a student's in-person vs remote days.



August 30, 2021
Page 1 of 1

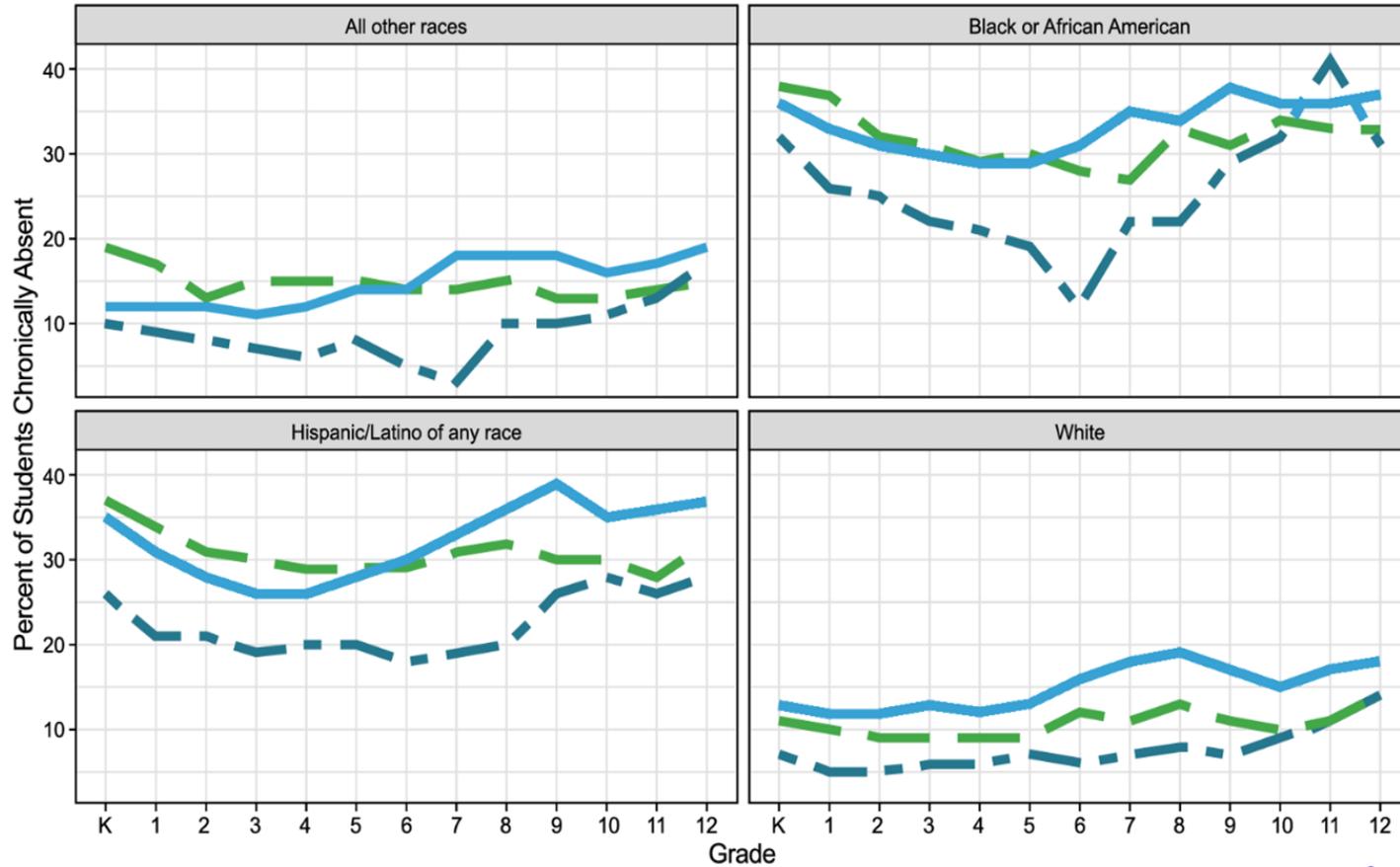
What does the data tell us about absenteeism in CT?



Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut



Chronic absence by learning mode and race/ethnicity in Connecticut for SY 2020-21



[See the full report](#)

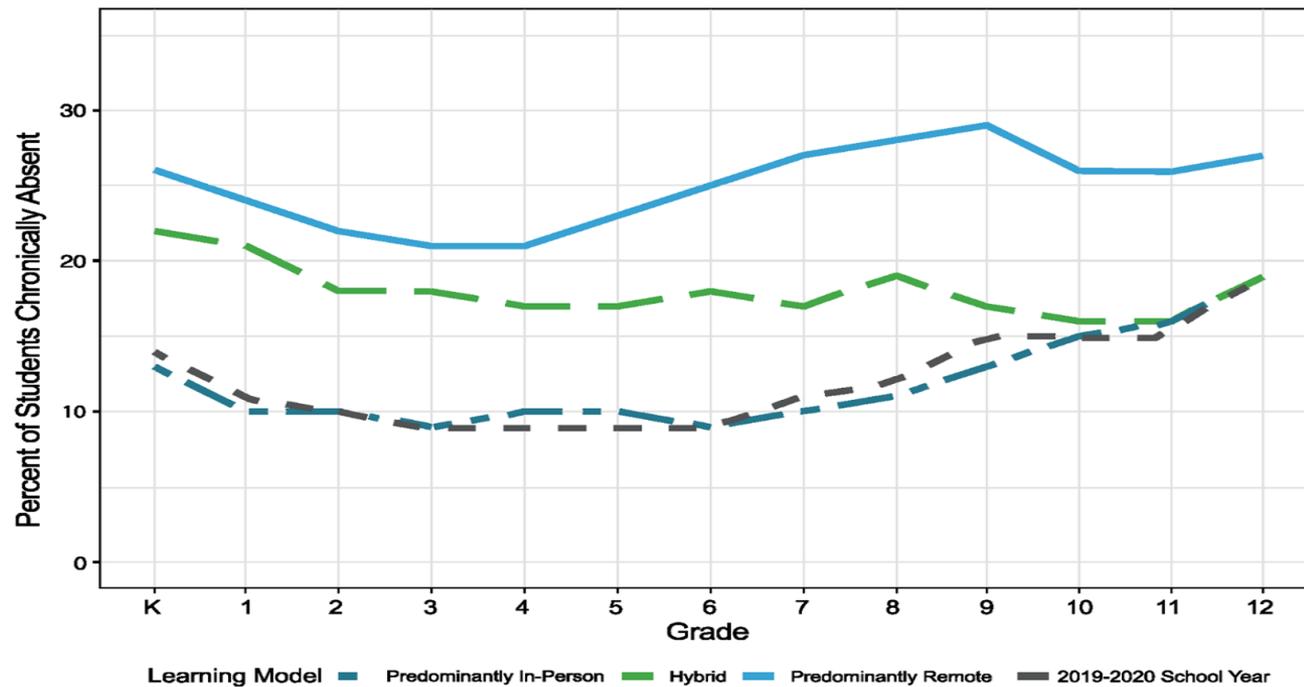
Learning Model ■ Predominantly In-Person ■ Hybrid ■ Predominantly Remote



Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut

One Key Finding: Chronic absence was most prevalent among predominantly remote students and least prevalent among in-person students, with rates for hybrid students falling in between

Chronic absence by learning mode across grades in Connecticut for SY 2020-21



[See the full report](#)



Where can I find attendance data for my school or district?

Reviewing and Monitoring Attendance Trends

[EdSight](#), an on-line portal for finding district and school-level data, including chronic absence.

[Supporting Student Participation in 2020-21](#) (monthly attendance by district and school for 2020-21 school year)

[Ed Sight Secure](#) and the Early Indication Tool



What resources can assist us with developing policies and practices for tracking and monitoring daily attendance?

- [Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences](#)
- [Tracking Daily Attendance on Remote Days in 2021-22](#) (for students learning remotely in limited/individualized circumstances)
- [CSDE Guidance Regarding the Future of Remote Learning in Connecticut Schools](#)
- [2021-22 PSIS Reference Guide](#)
 - See Appendix F – Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (PSIS), page 50
 - See Appendix L – Reporting Information about Students who are Disengaged, page 59



What are Mental Health Wellness Days?



[Public Act 21-46, An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health Safety and Education of Children](#), Section 19 (a) and (b), defines and allows students to have two Mental Health and Wellness (MHW) Days. The new legislation is as follows:

Sec. 19. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2021) (a) As used in this section and section 10-198b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, "mental health wellness day" describes a school day during which a student attends to such student's emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school.

(b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall permit any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, to take two mental health wellness days during the school year, during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school days.



What can districts and schools do to reduce numbers of days absent due to missing immunizations?



June 2018

Best Practices for *Improving Attendance* by Addressing School Health Assessments and Immunizations

What Schools and Districts Can Do

1. **Collaborate with district and community-based prekindergarten programs to educate entering kindergarten families.** District and/or community-based prekindergarten programs have relationships with families of students who will soon enter kindergarten. Collaborate with program leaders and their families to inform them about the importance of attendance, in general, and the requirements for kindergarten entry. Take advantage of meetings of Early Childhood Collaboratives and other organized early childhood groups for strategic communication.
2. **Communicate expectations with families early and often.** Before school ends every year, send letters home to parents of current Grades 5/6 or 8/9 students letting them know about the requirements for Grades 6/7 or 9/10 school entry. It may also be beneficial for staff/volunteers to attend middle and high school orientations to remind parents about the requirements.
3. **Build a community of shared ownership.** School health personnel benefit when colleagues help to extend

Improving Attendance by Addressing School Health Assessments and Immunizations (June 6, 2018)



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Is there anything in McKinney-Vento language that would address the needs of Afghan refugees specifically?

- There is nothing in the McKinney-Vento Act particular to refugees.
- However, the McKinney-Vento Act applies fully to all refugees experiencing homelessness.
- In general, liaisons receiving families from Afghanistan should identify them as McKinney-Vento eligible now. Of course, as in all things McKinney-Vento, eligibility is a case-by-case determination. However, the vast majority of these families certainly lack a fixed, regular and adequate **nighttime residence** at this time.
- The McKinney-Vento Act's education definition of homelessness includes:
children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. [ii] It specifically covers children and youth living in motels, shelters, transitional housing, cars, campgrounds, and sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.



Source:

Are McKinney-Vento resources translated into Farsi/Dari?

[Immigrant Students: How Schools Can Help](#) provides some information on applying the McKinney-Vento Act to immigrants and refugees.

Here are some resources in Farsi/Dari that might be helpful. Farsi is the primary language spoken in Afghanistan, although it is called Dari there.

1. [McKinney-Vento Brochure in Farsi/Dari](#) (Language spoken in Afghanistan), with thanks to San Juan USD, California; [English version](#) for reference
2. [McKinney-Vento Poster in Farsi/Dari](#) (Language spoken in Afghanistan), with thanks to Irvine USD, California; [English version](#) for reference
3. [McKinney-Vento Enrollment Form in Farsi/Dari](#) (Language spoken in Afghanistan), with thanks to Irvine USD, California; [English version](#) for reference

Here is some general information and links to help Afghans connect to services:

<https://refugees.org/resources-for-afghan-allies/>

<https://www.raicestexas.org/2021/08/27/faq-afghanistan/>



RESOURCES



CT Attendance Awareness Campaign

In partnership with [Attendance Works](#), CSDE has created messaging materials, in English and Spanish, for Connecticut districts and schools to use in their own attendance awareness campaigns. All materials can be downloaded and branded with a district or school's logo. The resources include banners, parent handouts, posters and coloring pages. All resources are in PDF format. Find the materials on the Connecticut [Attendance Awareness Campaign webpage](#).



Banners

- Elementary [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Secondary [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Parent Handouts

- Elementary [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Secondary [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Posters [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Coloring Pages [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Attend Today Connecticut

Stay on Track with Good Attendance...

Illustrations of a preschooler, elementary student, high schooler, college student, and worker.

PRESCHOOLERS build skills and develop good habits for showing up on time	ELEMENTARY STUDENTS read well by the end of third grade	HIGH SCHOOLERS stay on track for graduation	COLLEGE STUDENTS earn their degrees	WORKERS succeed in their jobs
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Too many absences—excused or unexcused—can keep students from succeeding in school and in life. How many are too many? 10% of the school year—that's 18 missed days or 2 days a month—can knock students off track.

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE> [#attendtodayCT](#) www.attendanceworks.org



#Vax2SchoolCT

**A Toolkit for Connecticut School Districts
DPH + CSDE**

[COVID Vaccines - A Toolkit for Connecticut Schools
\(#Vax2SchoolCT\)](#)

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE TEAMS

District Leadership Team –

- ensures the district, as a whole, is systematically addressing chronic absence and is promoting and supporting a districtwide culture of attendance.
- ensures evidence-based attendance policies and procedures are implemented consistently in all schools.
- spearheads connections with community service providers as partners in this work.
- elevates the importance of this work by designating a cabinet-level administrator to lead and facilitate the district's attendance efforts.

District Attendance Team –

- brings together district-level administrators and community agencies to address chronic absence across the entire district.
- Key functions:
 - Routinely unpack, analyze, and utilize data to inform action.
 - Organize a systemic districtwide response and policy/practice improvement.
 - Promote shared accountability and continuous improvement.
 - [Utilize District Self-assessment Tools](#) (Attendance Works)



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TEAMS

School Attendance Team – ensures that the school adopts a comprehensive, actionable tiered approach to improving attendance that is based on data and outcomes.

Organizing a School Attendance Review Team:

- Conduct a [school self-assessment](#).
- Establish a weekly meeting schedule.
- Define roles and responsibilities.
- Establish group norms.
- Develop a standard meeting agenda.
- Fill-in a tiered pyramid of students and resources.

Include families in planning and decision-making – Reach out to families to find out what might be preventing their children from coming to school; educate students and families about how absences can add up and result in lost learning time; empower families to help their children attend school; and offer trainings for school staff on engaging families and building productive partnerships to prevent chronic absenteeism.



Attendance 101!

CSDE Chronic Absence Webpage – [Related Resources](#)

Supporting Attendance & Engagement

- [Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts Guide](#), basics (nuts & bolts), start with a team, unpack the data, understand root causes and develop a plan, e.g., district role, school role, tiered approach, and community role
 - [Addendum 14: Supporting Student Attendance and Engagement during Hybrid or Remote Learning \(COVID-19\)](#)

Tracking and Monitoring Daily Attendance

- [Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences](#)
 - [Tracking Attendance on Remote Days for State Reporting & FAQs \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Public School Information System \(PSIS\) Reference Guide](#) - The PSIS Reference Guide contains detailed guidance on reporting student attendance, Appendix F, in the PSIS and for when to unregister students, Appendix L, who are not coming to school for extended periods of time.
 - [Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance](#)
 - [PSIS Appendix L - Reporting Information about Students who are Disengaged](#)

Reviewing & Monitoring Attendance Trends

- [EdSight](#), an on-line portal for finding district and school-level data, including chronic absence.
- [Supporting Student Participation in 2020-21](#) (monthly attendance by district and school for 2020-21 school year)
- [Ed Sight Secure](#) and the Early Indication Tool

Attendance 201!

State & National Related Resources

- [Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism](#), FutureED
- [Guide to Using the Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era](#), Attendance Works
- [Attendance Works](#) has developed a range of resources specific to grades served (i.e., elementary, middle, secondary) and aligned to five important strategies designed to improve attendance: recognizing good and improved attendance; engaging students and parents; monitoring attendance data and practice; providing personalized early outreach; and developing programmatic responses to barriers. A few examples include:
 - [Attendance Awareness Campaign, National](#)
 - [Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance](#)
 - [Year-Long Planning Calendars](#)
- [The Governor's Prevention Partnership](#), Connecticut Mentoring Resources, Training and Guidance
 - [Mentor: The National Mentoring Partnership](#)
- [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [Get Schooled](#)
- [Flamboyant Foundation](#), Building Effective Family Engagement

**STAY CONNECTED
&
LEARN TOGETHER**



Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Talk Tuesday

Tuesday, **October 5**, 2021
10 to 11 a.m.

Have a **promising practice or success**
you want to share?

Concerns you want to share through peer discussion?

Send ideas for topics for discussion to
Kari.Sullivan@ct.gov.

Community of Practice *District Attendance Leads*

Thursday, **September 21**, 2021
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Save the date!

All CoPs will be held on the 3rd Thursday of
the month from 10 to 11:30 a.m.



KEEP IN TOUCH!

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