

Minnesota State Attendance Pilot



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Minneapolis Public Schools

MPS State Attendance Pilot School Districts

Subd. 2. **Participating districts.** (a) The pilot program consists of the following school districts:

- (1) Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis;
- (2) Independent School District No. 13, Columbia Heights;
- (3) Independent School District No. 38, Red Lake;
- (4) Independent School District No. 47, Sauk Rapids–Rice;
- (5) Independent School District No. 77, Mankato;
- (6) Independent School District No. 152, Moorhead;
- (7) Independent School District No. 166, Cook County;
- (8) Independent School District No. 177, Windom;
- (2) Independent School District No. 191, Burnsville;
- (10) Independent School District No. 535, Rochester;
- (11) Independent School District No. 659, Northfield; and
- (12) Independent School District No. 695, Chisholm.

(b) Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, must serve as the lead district in the pilot program.

[Student Attendance Pilot Program Report to Legislators 31Dec2024.pdf](#)

[Student Attendance Pilot Program Report to Legislators July1st 2025.pdf](#)

Minnesota State Attendance Pilot Legislation

Subd. 3. Strategies. Participating districts must use pilot program aid to develop and implement sustainable strategies to reduce student absenteeism. Allowable uses of pilot program aid include but are not limited to:

- (1) addressing risk factors for high absenteeism through supports and interventions;
- (2) strategies that focus on the individual needs of each student;
- (3) personalized outreach to students who have stopped attending school, including home visits and connecting with students in community centers or other public areas;
- (4) regular meetings with students to provide tutoring or other supports or to connect students with resources that provide tutoring or other supports;
- (5) activities that increase students' sense of belonging in the school community.;
- (6) data analysis to assess the effectiveness of district strategies; and
- (7) technology that assists districts' efforts to communicate with students and families.

Minnesota State Attendance Pilot Legislation

- Subd. 4. Reporting. (a) The lead school district must submit reports to the chairs and minority leaders of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by December 31, 2024; July 1, 2025; July 1, 2026; and September 1, 2027. Each report must include each participating district's individual reports.
- (b) The first report must identify the goals and strategies each district plans to implement during the pilot program, and how each district counts and reports latenesses and absences. The other reports must identify each district's goals, strategies, challenges in meeting goals or implementing planned strategies, promising practices and practices that were not effective, and attendance data for the school year preceding the pilot program and the three school years of the pilot program. The attendance data must include attendance data for students that were absent up to ten percent of classes or school days, between ten and 29 percent of classes or school days, between 30 and 49 percent of classes or school days, and 50 percent or more of classes or school days; and for students who are homeless or highly mobile. The fourth report must also include recommendations for funding and statutory changes that would facilitate district efforts to implement local solutions to improve attendance.

Best Practice Strategies

Maintaining Accurate and Accessible Attendance Records

While taking attendance may seem like a tedious task, ensuring accurate attendance records for student absences and tardies enables school leaders and staff to trust the data they see.

When weekly reports present attendance data in accessible formats, we are able to carefully monitor attendance data and quickly identify both groups and individual students in need of intervention.

Best Practice Strategies

Build Strong, Supportive Relationships Between Adults and Students

Students are motivated to come to school when they feel the adults in the building care about them. Students desire individualized attention, feedback and clear instructions.

A culture where teachers monitor student attendance, engage with students regarding why absences are occurring, phone home after absences, and convey to students the importance of their presence and participation impacts engagement.

Relationships are essential to school engagement and cannot be built if students are not present; therefore, early intervention is particularly important.

Best Practice Strategies

Team Approach of Collective Responsibility

Attendance improves when all members of a district take collective responsibility for the success of all schools and students, not just individual schools or select student groups.

To build collective responsibility for absences and academic success consider developing a central office attendance team as well as school-based teams. Have access to real-time attendance reports and shared outreach support to respond to students who are absent or missing select classes.

Include student and family voice to understand obstacles, problem solve, create, and implement attendance solutions.

Best Practice Strategies

Engaging and Relevant Instruction

When active learning, real-world connections, and personalized experiences are incorporated into curriculum, students find value in attending.

Specific engagement strategies such as problem-based instruction, project-based learning, and CTE courses have a positive effect on attendance.

High quality afterschool programs significantly reduce absenteeism.

Pilot Districts Progress – Challenges

Pilot districts started with an exploration of current attendance practices and review of attendance data within their district.

Commonly identified challenges in responding to chronic absenteeism include:

- Inconsistencies in coding, tracking, and responding to absences.
- Inefficient or lack of communication channels with families.
- Difficulty in identifying and providing interventions across all tiers, especially for students who are most chronically absent.
- Inconsistent application of responses to absences.

Pilot Districts Strategies

- Identifying approaches to reduce chronic absenteeism is complex as students miss school for multiple reasons.
- What is an innovative strategy to one district may be a routinely practiced strategy in another district.
- Pilot districts are aiming to identify what works locally for their students, under what circumstances, what the results are, and how to evaluate, energize, and continually improve.
- Most of the strategies require significant person power to organize, serve, and evaluate the work.

Pilot Districts Shared Strategies

- Mentoring/Success Coaches: Mentors identified for the pilot include existing staff, newly employed mentors, and partnership with the Minnesota Alliance With Youth for AmeriCorps Promise Fellows.
- Communication with Families: Techniques that communicate the relevance of attendance. Text messaging, nudge letters, linguistically appropriate messaging.
- Home visits. Family navigators, Student Engagement Specialists, Student Support Staff.
- Student voice. Student led attendance teams, surveys,
- Community partnerships. County, city, tribal, and nonprofits.
- Family engagement. Surveys, outreach, family engagement specialist.
- Mental health supports. Internal and external partnerships.
- Alignment of attendance procedures, coding, and policy.

Promising Practices

Universal Supports (All Students)

- Family Communication: Regular updates on district policies and student absences. School and district attendance teams.
- Student Led Attendance teams.
- School Challenges & Campaigns: Engaging activities and attendance awareness efforts to promote regular attendance.
- Student Engagement Surveys: Conducted to assess and improve school experiences. Structured morning routines and positive reinforcement through reward systems.

Promising Practices

Targeted Supports (At-Risk Students)

- Family Outreach: Personalized communication to identify and address attendance barriers. Text messages to families to build awareness of absences.
- Attendance support and student engagement initiatives.
- Tardy Tracking: Review of data in school information systems to identify and provide intervention to students who are habitually tardy.
- Mentoring with both staff volunteer mentors and dedicated mentors.

Promising Practices

Targeted Supports (At-Risk Students)

- Transportation Assistance: Creation of reports to identify at-risk students and provide assistance to families struggling with district transportation or walking zones.
- Administrative Support: Assistance in assuring timely notification through letters, phone calls, and family meetings related to absences.
- Attendance incentives.

Promising Practices

Intensive Interventions (Chronically Absent Students)

- MTSS Team Collaboration: Individualized intervention plans for high-needs students. Family & County Coordination: Ongoing meetings, progress updates, and preparation of truancy documentation for county submission.

Time is still needed to verify findings and build upon implementation strategies to discover new insights and contribute to more robust and efficient systems of prevention and intervention.

Common Challenges

School Level Resource and Capacity Constraints:

- Administrative support is vital for attendance-taking, coding, addressing inconsistencies in application and staff training.
- State-level guidance is needed for coding and counting absences.
- Clear systems must be established to address chronic absenteeism, including referring students to MTSS for targeted support.
- While most schools have Attendance or Support Teams, staff shortages limit the ability to provide regular and intensive interventions.
- Truancy reporting can be delayed due to lack of staff time to file reports. Transportation: students in walk zones, inconsistent bus routes, behavior issues, and lack of transportation outside standard hours impact.

Common Challenges

Collaboration Issues:

- Family Communication: Families need clarity on attendance policies, illness-related absences, and reporting procedures.
- Lack of effective partnership with county staff responding to truancy reports. Many county referrals result in no action or an action that does not
- improve attendance or address underlying causes.
- Families
- Cost and sustainability of partnering with outside community agencies.

Focus Areas for Strategic Development

- Most absences are coded excused. Top reasons are illness, appointments, family emergency, and vacation.
- Improvement in communication with families about the number of absences, reasons to be absent, and promoting proactive attendance practices.
- Development of strategies for the most chronically absent students that are persistent, impactful, sustainable, and available throughout the state.
- Clear and consistent coding guidelines.

Creation of targeted solutions in focus areas done in tandem with current resource optimization will maximize impact and provide measurable outcomes.

Legislative Student Attendance & Truancy Study Group

- The Student Attendance and Truancy Study Group hosted meetings both in-person and via Zoom to receive feedback from the Department of Education, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, tribal officials, county officials, school administrators, and students from across the state. Testimony and discussion raised a myriad of issues and current programs tackling student attendance.
- From this review, the Study Group recommended a discussion of statutory changes and agency recommendations in eight areas

Attendance & Truancy Study Group Recommendations

1. Explore consistent definitions around attendance.
2. Explore coordination among state and local agencies.
3. Explore community engagement – Cultural/Lived experience school credit.
4. MDE recommendation – Increased Data on Attendance.
5. Explore increased data sharing between school districts and county governments.
6. Explore school staff dedicated to truancy reduction.
7. Explore transportation of students to and from school.
8. Explore community support.

Minneapolis Public Schools State Attendance Pilot



Academic Achievement

Every student achieves their full potential through equal access to programming that is academically rigorous and connects learning with students' experiences.

Student Well-Being

Effective Staff

School and District Climate



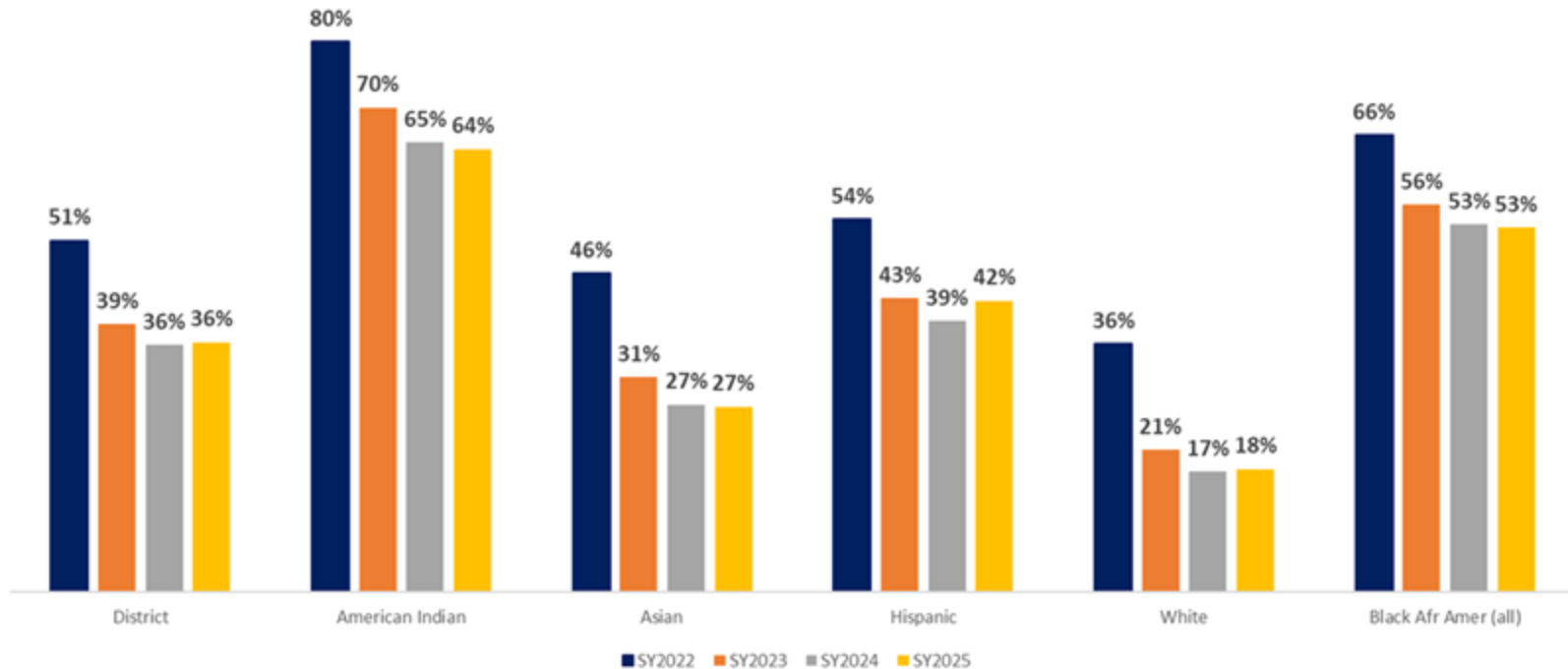
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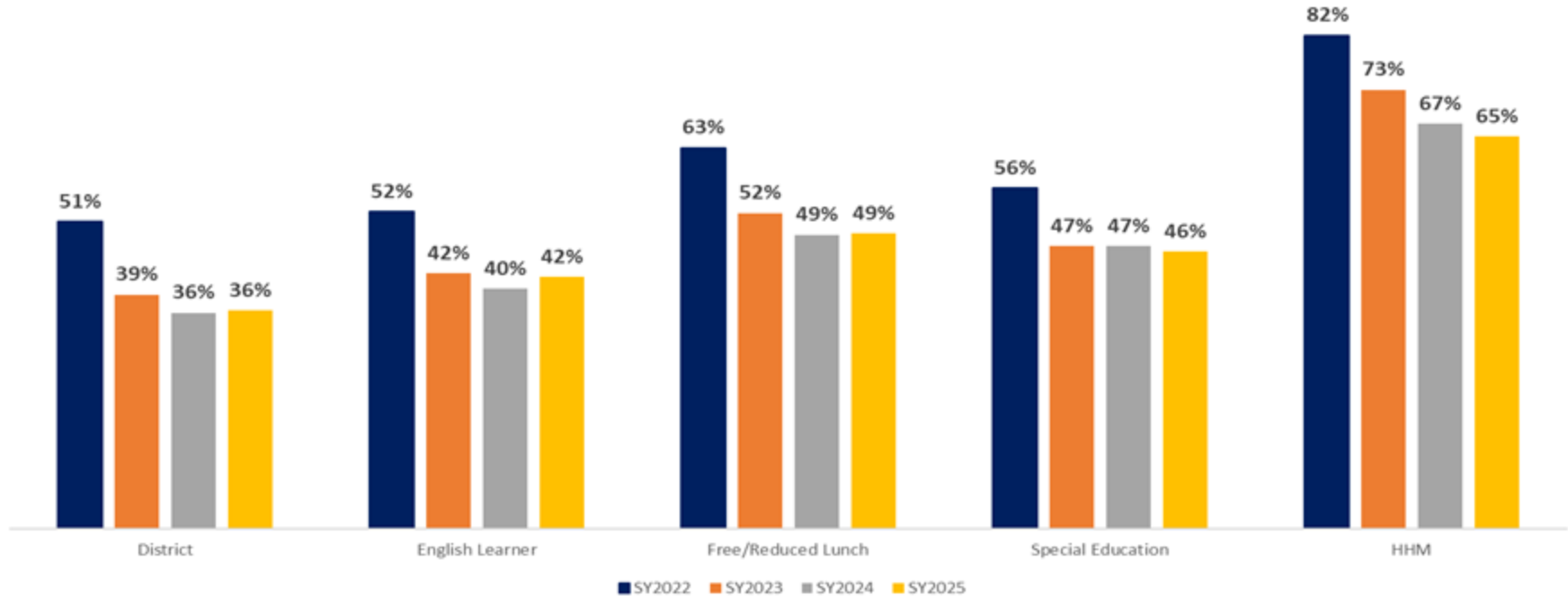
- Support schools in prevention of absences and the ability to rapidly identify and respond to students who are chronically absent using best practices with the understanding that attendance efforts are about engagement and partnership, not solely about compliance.
- Foster the development of student, family, school, and community partnerships to create strong, ongoing working collaborations addressing student attendance, engagement, and well-being.



Review of MPS Chronic Absenteeism

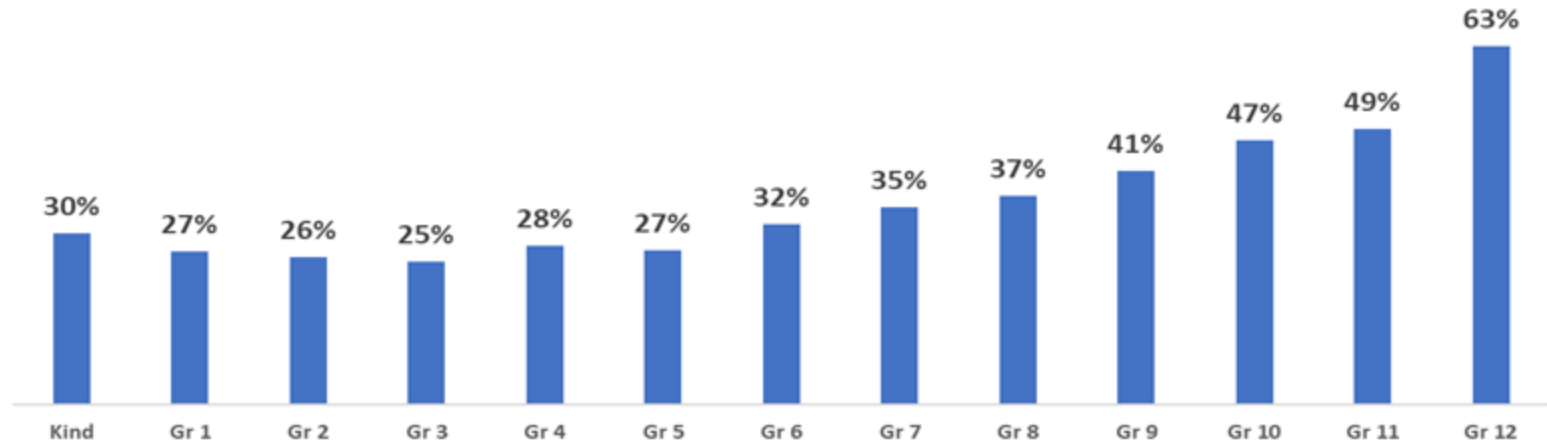


Review of MPS Chronic Absenteeism



Review of MPS Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism by Grade SY2025



Move Away from a Failure First Model to a Problem-Solving Approach.

- Focus on building asset-based relationships with students and families.
- Promote early positive outreach to student and families to jointly identify and address attendance barriers.
- Promote a prevention and early intervention multi-tiered approach.
- A district-wide approach that acknowledges that everyone has a role to play in supporting students.

Student Led Attendance Teams – Tier 1

Empowering students to actively participate in building the culture of their school and positively impact daily attendance and the overall well-being of students.

Deliverables: Student Led Attendance Teams will

- become informed and understand the impact absences have on their peers and school.
- engage peers in identifying obstacles to daily attendance.
- develop ideas/actions that create a sense of belonging, positively impact daily attendance, and are inclusive to all students.
- implement ideas.
- review outcomes and identify next steps.

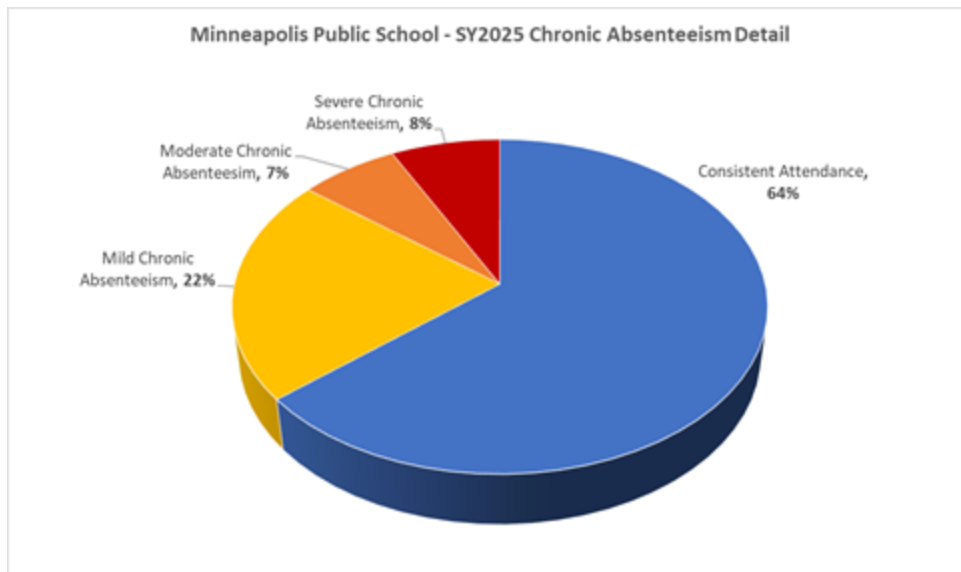
Caring Adult, Mentoring – Tier 2

Check, Connect, & Expect will be implemented with existing school staff to promote engagement in learning by creating a sense of belonging through a meaningful, intentional relationship.

Deliverables: Check, Connect & Expect will

- create positive adult relationships with disengaged learners.
- foster a sense of belonging.
- allow students to identify a caring adult at school.
- address daily attendance and barriers to success.
- promote strength-based development.
- review outcomes and identify next steps.

MPS Chronic Absenteeism – Tier 3



- Mild Chronic Absenteeism attending 80% – 90% (22% – 6136 students)
- Moderate Chronic Absenteeism attending 70% – 79% (7%– 1939 students)
- Severe Chronic Absenteeism attending <70% (8% – 2146 students)

Tier 3 MPS Be@School Referral Outcomes



1823 MPS Students Reported to Be@School SY25

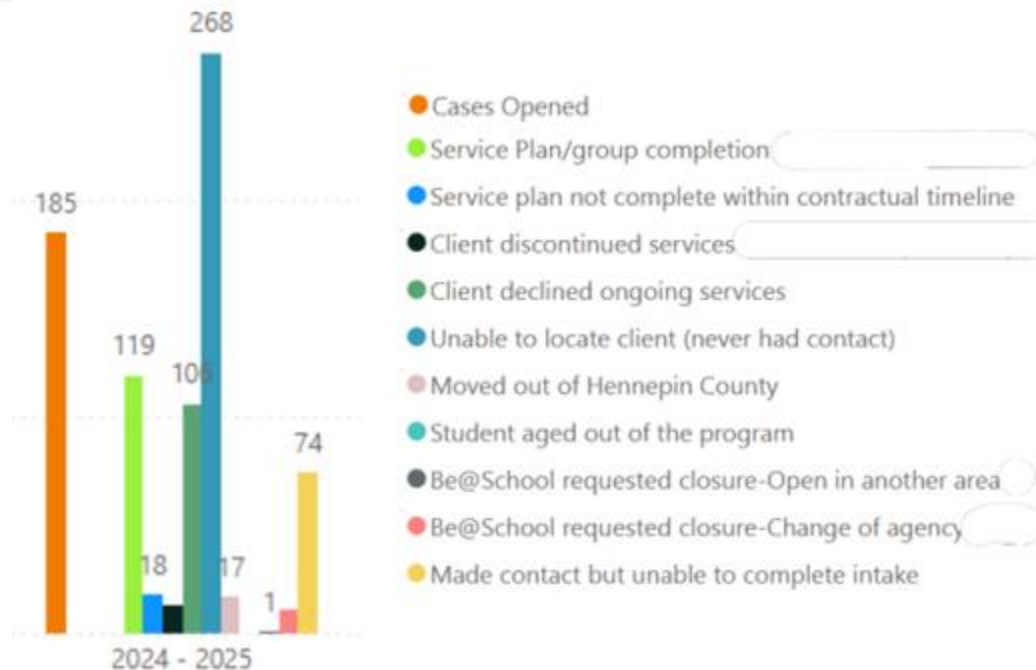
61% Ages 5 – 11 39% Ages 12-17 19% HHM 6% Referred to CPS

- 41% (745) of 1823 students report to HCAO referred to an agency.
- 36% (268) of the 745 referred the agency did not make contact.
- 25% (185) of the 745 referred to an agency accept service.
- 64% (119) of the 185 students referred completed a service plan.
- 57% (106) of the 185 served declined ongoing service.
- 10% of MPS 1823 students reported served by an agency.

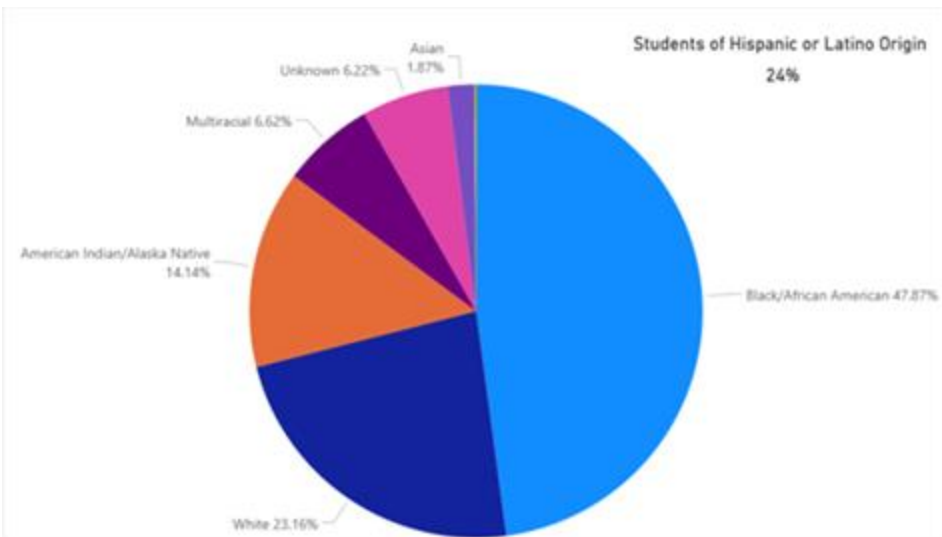
Tier 3 MPS Be@School Referral Outcomes



Outcomes of student assignments:



MPS BASIL Reported Students Race/Ethnicity



Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
American Indian	1,686	5.6%
Asian	1,013	3.4%
Black or African American	7,767	26.0%
Hispanic or Latino	6,874	23.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	19	0.1%
Other Indigenous Peoples	11	0.0%
White	10,835	36.2%
Two or more races	1,723	5.8%
All students	29,928	100.0%

Student Engagement Specialists – Tier 3

Mentor, Advocate, Case Manager

Student Engagement Specialists and Guidance Counselor will serve our most chronically absent students by working directly and collaboratively with a caseload of students and their families, school site staff, MPS district staff, county service units, and community service providers to implement comprehensive and inclusive strategies that address engagement with learning and a sense of belonging. Students and their families will be served for a minimum of one year.

A Caring Adult

Guidance Counselor: Tier 3 Focus plus Universal Support



Support schools in shifting from blame to understanding absences and providing support.



Mental health issues – anxiety, depression, trauma are major contributors to absences.



Students missing school are often struggling – not defiant.

Providing support to students, families and school staff.

Whole Child Approach

Unmet mental health needs → School refusal

Students with unmet mental health needs are
2x more likely to be chronically absent.



School Avoidance/Refusal

Recognition, Understanding, Response

- Ongoing difficulty going to school or staying in the classroom.
- Emotional distress (anxiety, fear, panic) drives the behavior, not defiance.
- May present as hiding, crying, complaints of physical illness.
- Begins subtly and can escalate to chronic absenteeism.

Common Barriers to Solutions



Families feel isolated or stigmatized.



Harsh or punitive responses work against building trust.



Limited school-based resources.



Lack of staff training in early identification and referral.

MPS Attendance Pilot

Behind Every Chronically Absent Student is a Story



Our Aim: Give every student the opportunity to tell their story and the support needed to turn the page.

Questions?

