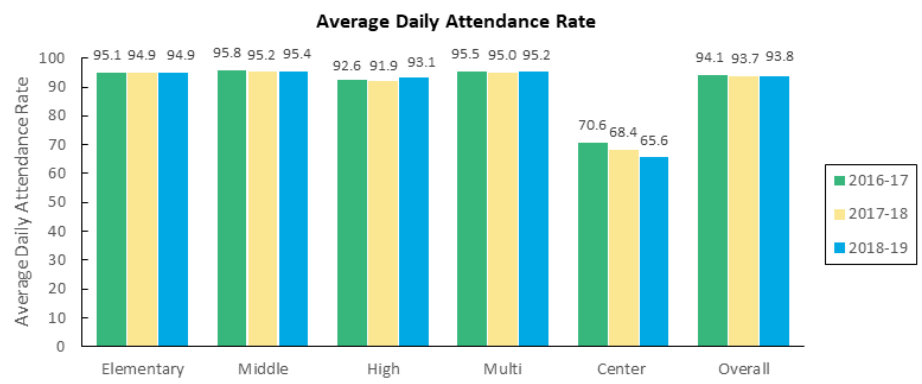


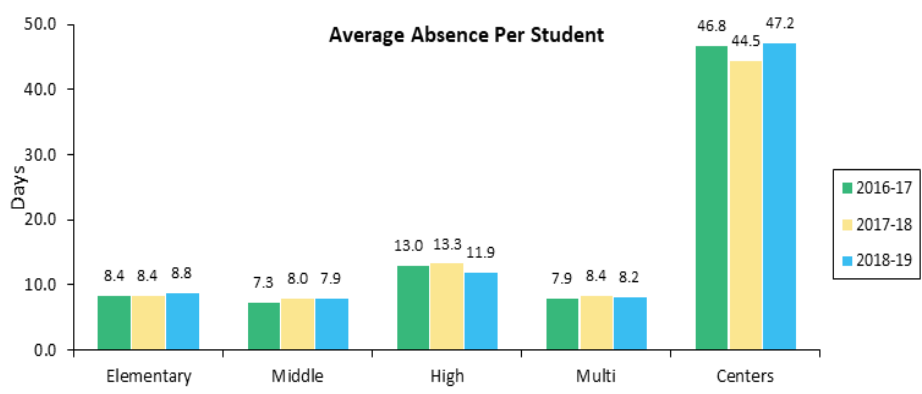
On Average  
**93.8%**  
of students are in  
school everyday

- The average daily attendance rate decreased by 0.3 percentage points between 2016-17 and 2018-19.
- Attendance was lower for high schools (93%) compared to elementary, middle, and multi-level schools (95%). Attendance at centers was the lowest (66%).
- Average absences per student ranged from 8 at middle schools to 47 at centers during the 2018-19 school year.
- Black, Hispanic, and White students had the same daily attendance rate (94%). However, Black students had a higher proportion of unexcused absences (68%) than Hispanic (55%) or White students (40%).
- Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students with chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (11%), followed by multi-level (13%), elementary (14%), high (23%) and centers (80%).
- Students who had the majority of their absences excused were slightly more likely to be proficient on the FSAs in Reading and Math than were students who had the majority of their absences unexcused.

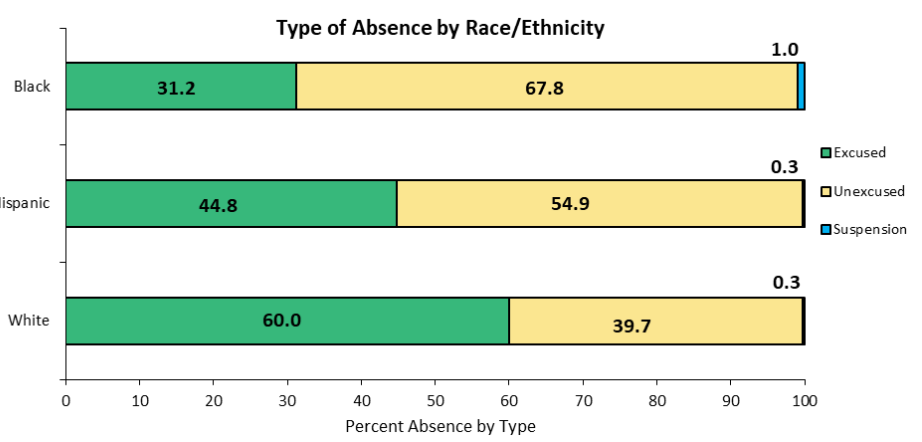
**Attendance Rate by School Level**



**Average Number of Absences per Student**



**Absence Type and Race**



**Additional Resources**

- Detailed school-by-school results: <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>
- Information on BCPS's attendance programs: <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/34787>

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**DANIEL GOHL  
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

*Signatures on File*

DATE: December 2, 2019

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl  
Chief Academic Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.  
Chief School Performance & Accountability Officer

SUBJECT: **STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2016-17 THROUGH 2018-19**

Broward County Public School's overall average daily attendance rate (ADA) decreased by 0.3 percentage points between the 2016-17 (94.1%) and 2018-19 (93.8%) school years. The ADA rate was similar for elementary, middle, and multi-level schools (ranging from 94.9% to 95.4%) in 2018-19. High schools were lower (93.1%), and centers showed the lowest ADA rate (65.6%).

During the most recent school year, ADA rates were the same for Black, Hispanic, and White students (93.7%, 93.8%, and 93.9%, respectively). However, absences varied by type for each group. Of all absences recorded, Black students had the largest proportion of unexcused (compared to excused) absences (67.8%) followed by Hispanic (54.9%) and White students (39.7%).

Broward data for the 2018-19 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attendees (0 – 4.9% absences), At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences), Chronic Absence (10 – 19.9% absences), and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). For students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism, middle schools had the smallest proportion of students (11.3%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.9%), high (23.1%), and centers (80.1%).

Attendance dipped on Thursday, February 14, 2019, the one-year commemoration of the Stoneman Douglas tragedy, with 17.6% of students absent on that day, compared to 5.5% absent on the previous day. Attendance rebounded the following Tuesday (Monday was a holiday), with 5.2% absent on that day.

Questions regarding this report should be addressed to **Richard Baum, Director of Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500**. This report may also be accessed on the Student Assessment & Research website at: <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>.

RWR/DG/VSW/RGB/RAA/JAC:rs  
Attachments

cc: School Board Members  
Senior Leadership Team  
Directors, Office of School Performance & Accountability  
Jody Perry, Director, Charter Schools Support



# Research Brief

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2016-17 THROUGH 2018-19

This brief summarizes attendance trends in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) for the three-school year period from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

### METHOD

Data from all three school years, excluding summers, were gathered from the District’s data warehouse for all district schools (district-managed and charter). For each school year, the total population reflects the number of students in grades kindergarten through 12 who attended a BCPS school for at least five days during the year. Student absences are credited to the school the student attended the most during that school year. Absences are classified as excused (parent/guardian notified the school), unexcused (no parent/guardian notified the school), or suspension (external suspension). Results are presented in figures and tables, and additional materials are included in appendices.

### OVERALL ATTENDANCE

The overall District average daily attendance (ADA) rate decreased from 94.1% in 2016-17 to 93.8% in 2018-19. Figure 1 illustrates the ADA rate by school level for the three-year period (also see Appendix A).

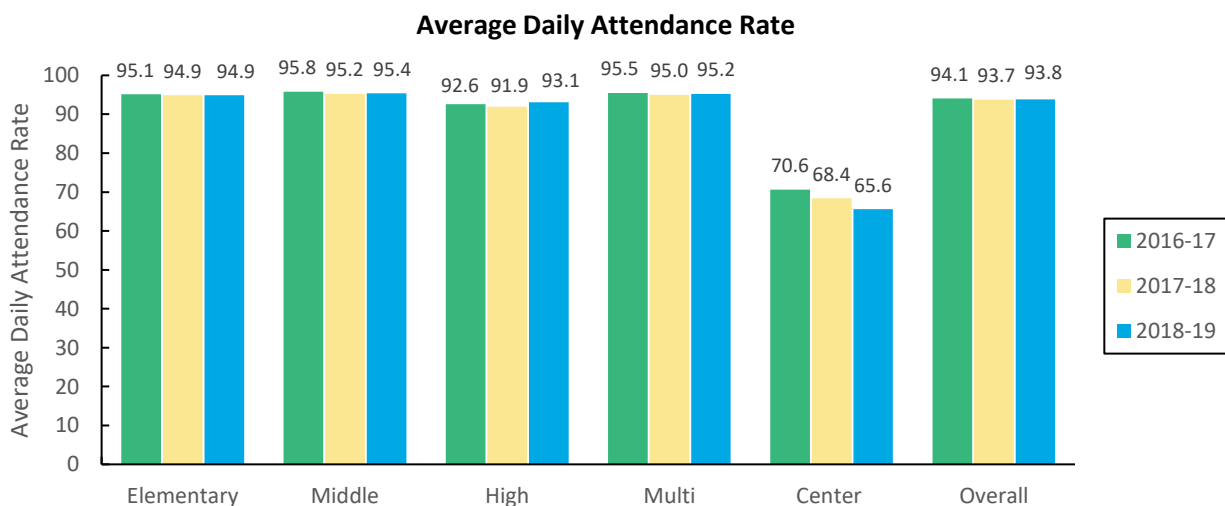


Figure 1. Average daily attendance rate, by school level, 2016-17 through 2018-19.

Figure 2 shows the average number of days absent per student by school level for the three-year period. Historically, high school students averaged more days absent than middle, elementary, and multi-level students. Over the three-year period the average number of recorded absences increased slightly at all school levels with the exception of high school, where the average number of absences fell from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Students at centers averaged more than three times as many days absent than students at the high school level (also see Appendix B).

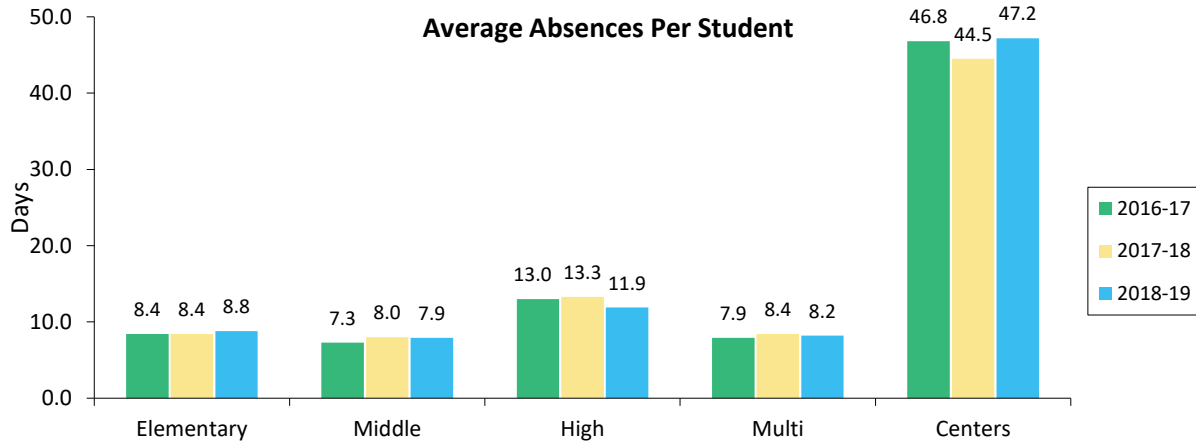


Figure 2. Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2016-17 through 2018-19.

Table 1 displays the average daily attendance rate by race/ethnicity for the three-year period. For the District, the ADA decreased with slightly less than a one percentage point difference (0.3 percentage points) between 2016-17 and 2018-19. Black, Hispanic, and White students all had relatively the same average daily attendance rate (93.7, 93.8, and 93.9, respectively) in the 2018-19 school year. In all three years, Asian students had the greatest average daily attendance rate (also see Appendix C).

Table 1

Student Attendance Rates by Students' Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17 through 2018-19

Race/Ethnicity	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate
Asian	9,937	95.7	9,962	95.6	10,024	95.6
Black	107,335	94.1	106,869	93.6	105,974	93.7
Hispanic	92,616	94.1	95,440	93.6	97,034	93.8
Multi-Racial	7,327	94.1	7,377	93.7	7,410	93.6
Native American	758	93.4	761	93.0	685	93.0
Pacific Islander	411	93.9	452	93.6	473	94.1
White	58,693	94.1	56,399	93.6	53,829	93.9
<b>District</b>	<b>277,097</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>277,260</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>275,429</b>	<b>93.8</b>

Table 2 displays the number and percent of students with perfect attendance and students with fifteen or more total absences, by school level. Multi-level schools had the highest percent of students with perfect attendance (12.6%), followed by middle schools (8.4%) and elementary schools (6.2%). High schools and centers had the lowest percent of students with perfect attendance (6.0%, and 4.8%, respectively). Centers had the highest percent of students with fifteen or more absences (78.1%). High schools had the next highest (27.9%), followed by elementary (17.9%), multi-level (16.8%), and middle schools (14.8%). Over the three-year period the percent with no absences decreased at all school levels with the exception of multi-level schools, which saw an increase in perfect attendance from 9.7% to 12.6%. The percent with fifteen or more absences increased at all school levels from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

Table 2  
*Number and Percent of Students with Perfect Attendance and Fifteen or More Absences by School Level, 2016-17 through 2018-19*

	No Absences		15+ Total Absences		Total
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>
<b>2016-17</b>					
Elementary	7,919	6.8	19,010	16.3	116,279
Middle	5,286	10.0	6,665	12.6	52,885
High	5,364	6.8	20,737	26.4	78,503
Center	415	7.2	4,033	70.1	5,754
Multi	2,287	9.7	3,483	14.7	23,676
<b>2017-18</b>					
Elementary	7,750	6.7	19,135	16.6	115,103
Middle	4,007	7.4	8,123	15.0	54,295
High	3,886	4.9	23,475	29.8	78,830
Center	237	4.5	3,888	74.3	5,236
Multi	2,293	9.6	4,010	16.9	23,796
<b>2018-19</b>					
Elementary	6,979	6.2	20,307	17.9	113,436
Middle	4,658	8.4	8,200	14.8	55,342
High	4,539	6.0	20,977	27.9	75,132
Center	384	4.8	6,180	78.1	7,918
Multi	2,976	12.6	3,962	16.8	23,601

**ABSENCES BY TYPE: EXCUSED, UNEXCUSED, AND SUSPENSION**

Figure 3 shows the percent of absences disaggregated by type: excused, unexcused, and suspension, by school level for 2018-19. Centers had the highest percent of unexcused absences (90.5%), followed by multi-level schools (60.2%). The school level with the lowest percent of unexcused absences was middle schools (39.2%; also see Appendix D). Over the three-year period the percent of excused absences went down and the percent of unexcused absences went up for all school levels except for high schools which saw the reverse pattern hold.

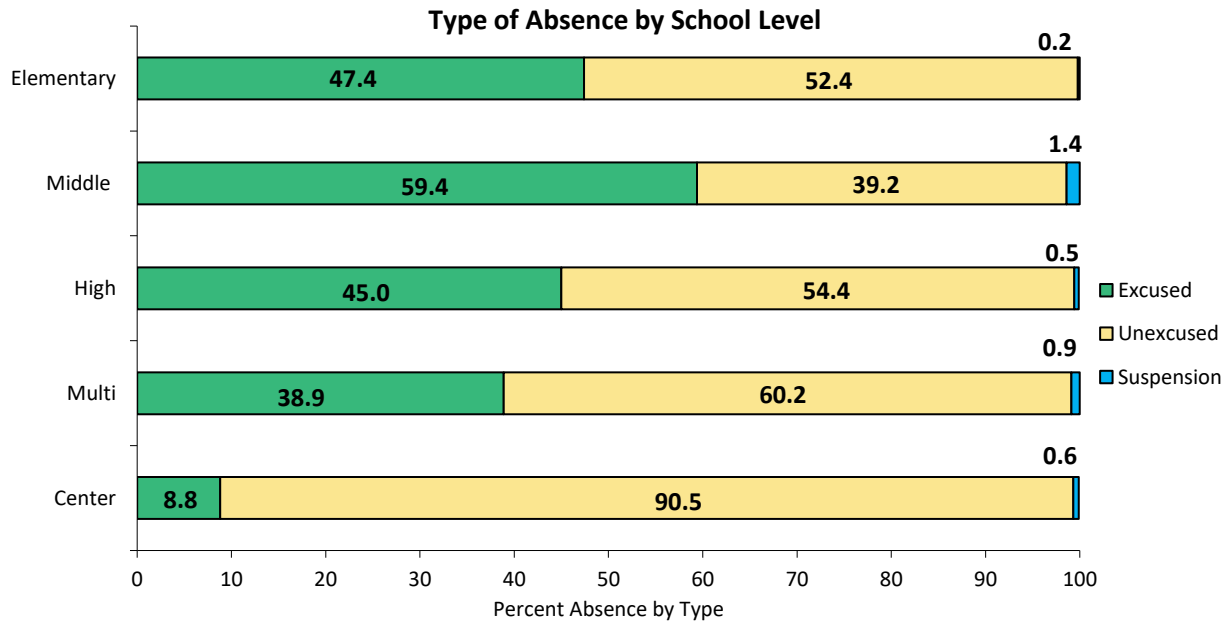


Figure 3. Rate of absence by type and by school level, 2018-19.

Figure 4 shows the percent of excused, unexcused, and suspension data based on the total number of absences, by the largest student racial/ethnic groups. The data show that although Black, Hispanic, and White students all have about the same average daily attendance rate (93.7%, 93.8%, and 93.9%, respectively), Black students registered a higher unexcused absence percent (67.8%) than Hispanic (54.9%) or White students (39.7%; also see Appendix E).

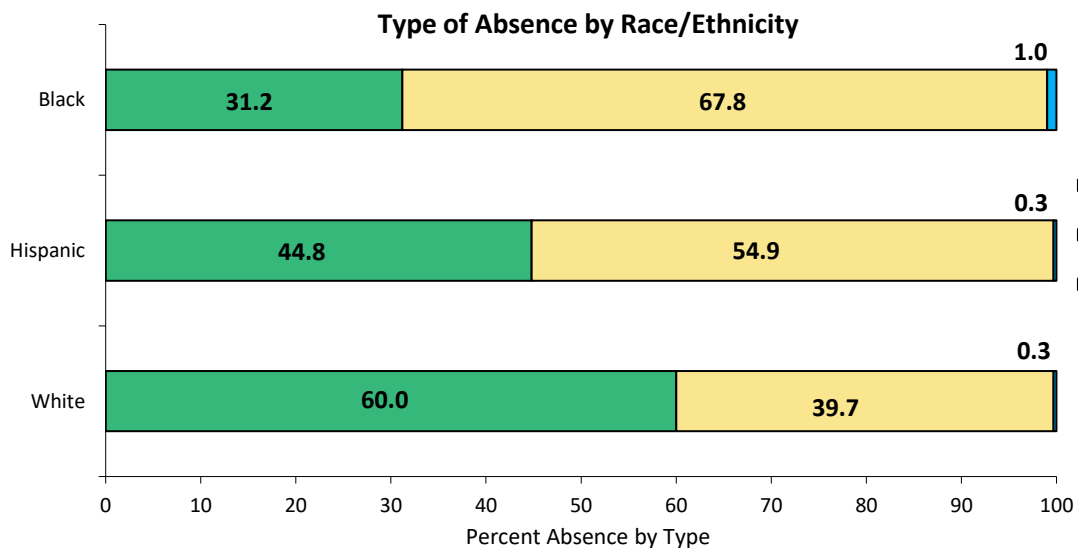


Figure 4. Rate of absence by type and by largest racial/ethnic groups, 2018-19.

## ABSENCE TYPE AND ACHIEVEMENT PERFORMANCE

Differences in 2018-19 achievement test performance were explored by the type of absence, excused vs. unexcused. For this analysis, we looked at the percentage of absences that were excused vs. unexcused, focusing on only those students with at least one absence. Reading (Florida Standards Assessments for English language arts, or FSA ELA) ( $N = 116,224$ ) and math (FSA mathematics and End of Course exams for Algebra I and Geometry) ( $N = 105,014$ ) were compared.

For this analysis we predicted FSA and EOC proficiency by percent of absences that were excused, while controlling for other factors that are associated with proficiency. That is, we held constant the following factors: total number of absences in 2018-19, gender, race/ethnicity, eligibility for free and reduced lunch, English language learner status, students with disability status, number of unexcused absences in the prior year, and prior year achievement level on the FSA or EOC of interest. The strongest predictor of performance on the 2018-2019 FSA/EOC was, not surprisingly, prior year performance. Yet the percent of absences that were excused was also a significant predictor of FSA/EOC performance for both Reading and Math, even after holding constant prior year performance and the other factors listed above. As the percent of excused absences increased, so did the odds of achieving proficiency on the FSA/EOC for both Reading and Math. Specifically, the odds of achieving proficiency in 2018-19 improved by 1.0 with every percentage point increase in excused absences for both reading and math.

For visualization purposes we looked at two groups, those who had greater than 75% of their absences excused and those who had greater than 75% of their absences unexcused. These two groups were fairly closely matched on the number of total absences they had in the 2018-19 year overall. Among those students with scores for ELA and Math in 2018 and 2019, students with greater than 75% excused absences averaged 8.5 absences ( $n = 34,615$ ) and students with greater than 75% unexcused absences averaged 7.3 absences ( $n = 26,907$ ).

As an example, for reading, among those who achieved proficiency in the prior year, 90.4% of students in the greater-than-75%-excused group achieved proficiency scores in 2018-19 compared to 84.5% of students in the greater-than-75%-unexcused group. For reading, among those who did not achieve proficiency in the prior year, 25.0% of students in the greater-than-75%-excused group achieved proficiency in 2018-19, compared to just 17.1% of students in the greater-than-75%-unexcused group. A similar pattern emerged for mathematics (see Figures 5 and 6 and Appendix F).

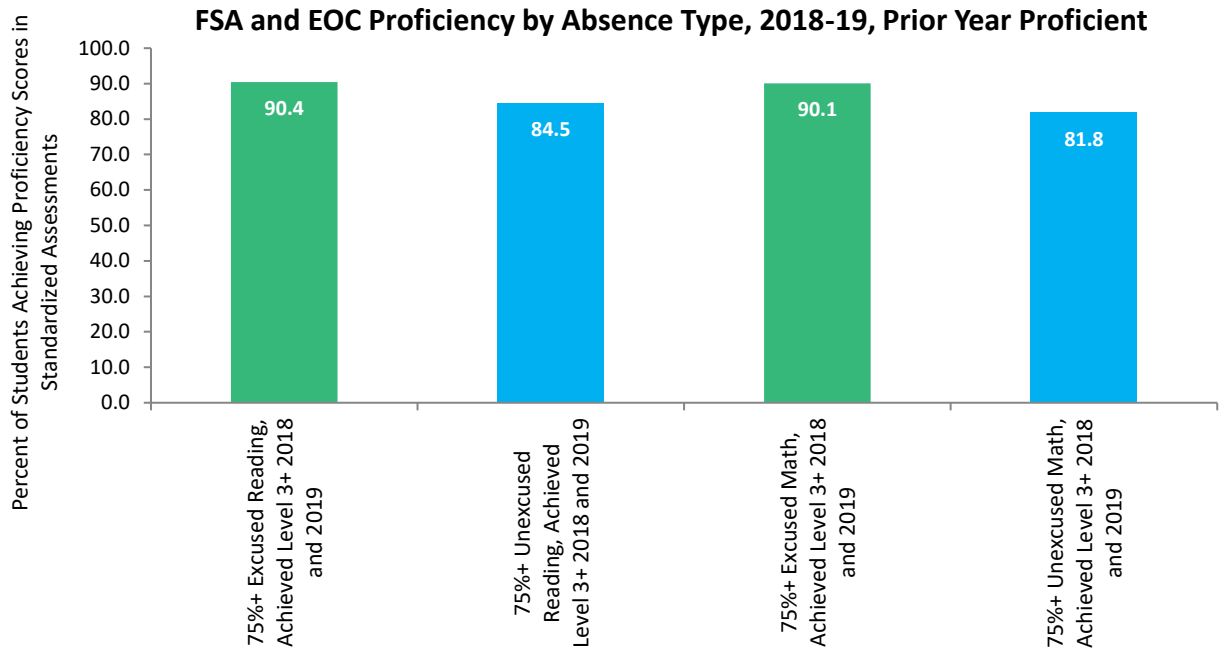


Figure 5. Percent of students proficient on standardized ELA and math assessments (FSA and EOC exams), by absence type for the 2018-19 school year who were proficient in prior year.

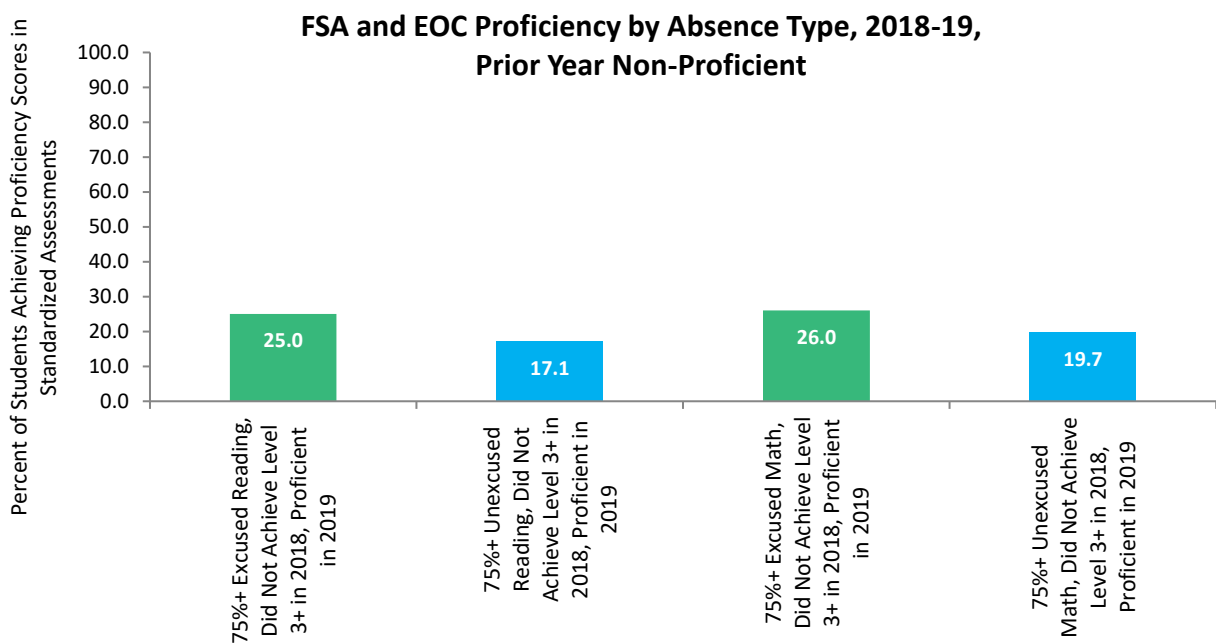


Figure 6. Percent of students proficient on standardized ELA and math assessments (FSA and EOC exams), by absence type for the 2018-19 school year who were non-proficient in prior year.



### ATTENDANCE CATEGORIES IN 2018-19

Passed by Congress in 2015, the federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), replaces No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). States must include five indicators of school quality, four on academic achievement, and a fifth, non-academic measure. Many states chose chronic absenteeism as the fifth indicator (Jordan & Miller, 2017). Florida’s ESSA plan requires school districts to implement an early warning system which identifies students in K-8 who may need additional support to succeed in school. As part of the early warning system, attendance must be included (Florida Department of Education, 2018).

Broward data for the 2018-19 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attenders (0 – 4.9% absences); At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences); Chronic Absenteeism (10 – 19.9% absences); and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (11.3%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.9%), high (23.1%), and centers (80.1%); (see Figure 6 and Appendix G).

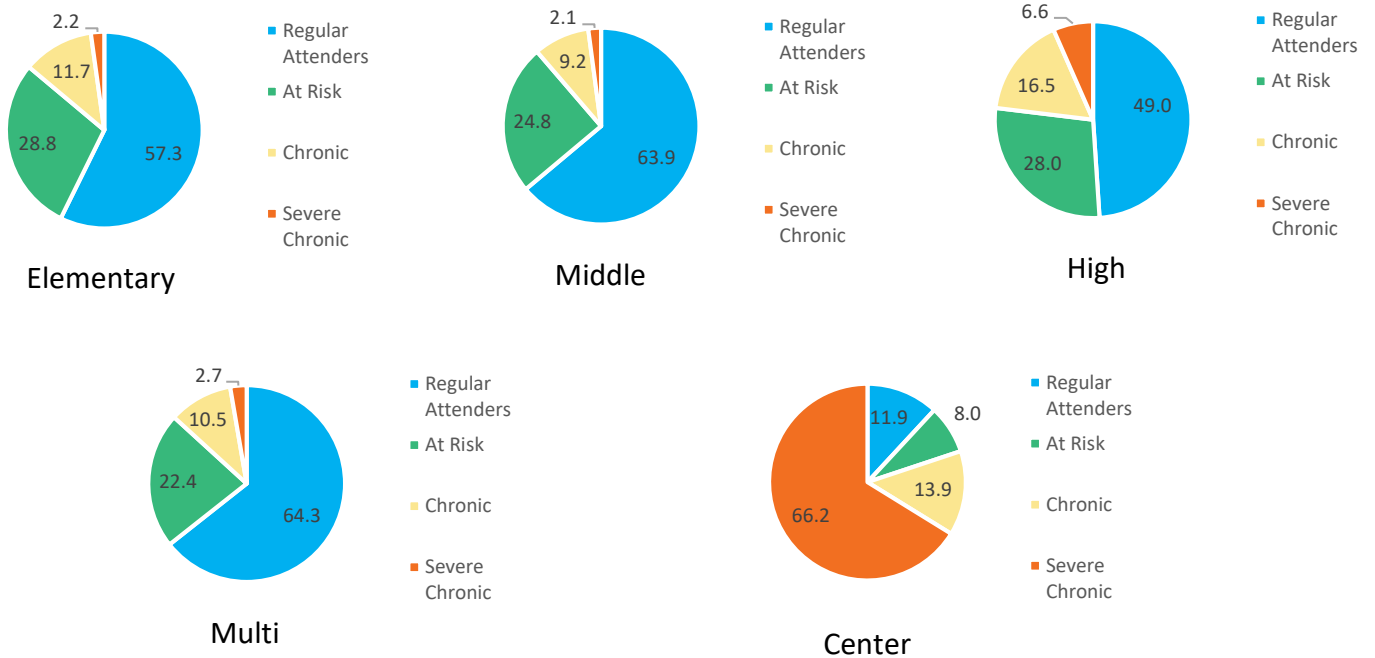


Figure 7. Percent of students absent by school level and attendance category for the 2018-19 school year.

## DAY-SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE INFORMATION IN 2018-19

On February 14, 2018 Broward County Public Schools experienced a tragic event at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSD). On the one-year commemoration of that tragedy the Broward County School Board invited the District to participate in *A Day of Service and Love* by engaging in acts of service alongside the larger community as a way for students to mourn and/or commemorate the students and staff who lost their lives. Families of Marjory Stoneman Douglas students received an email from Stoneman Douglas Principal Ty Thompson on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, encouraging students to report to campus for a half-day of community service activities, or to engage in their own community service projects off campus. MSD students who chose not to attend on February 14<sup>th</sup> or on February 15<sup>th</sup> would have their absences excused (Bakeman, 2019). Districtwide, on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 46,210 (17.6%) students were absent, either excused or unexcused, compared to 14,509 (5.5%) the day before, and 28,510 (10.8%) the day after, a Friday. The following Monday was a holiday. Attendance rebounded on February 19, the following Tuesday, when 13,799 students were absent (5.2%) (see Table 3). A similar number of students to the February 14, 2019 date were absent on June 6, 2019 (the last day of school). The distribution of absences on February 14<sup>th</sup> was not consistent across school levels (see Table 4) and across cities in Broward (see Table 5). Besides Centers, where absences are traditionally high, absences were highest at the high school level and lowest at the elementary school level. The top three cities with the highest percentage of students absent on February 14<sup>th</sup> were Coconut Creek, with 32.8 percent absent, Coral Springs, with 32.2 percent absent, and Parkland, with 29.7 percent absent.

Table 3  
*Student Day-Specific Absence and Attendance Rate, District Overall, 2018-19*

Day	Population N	Students Absent		Average Daily Attendance Rate
		n	%	%
February 13, 2019	263,038	14,509	5.5	94.5
February 14, 2019	262,968	46,210	17.6	82.4
February 15, 2019	262,894	28,510	10.8	89.2
February 19, 2019	262,921	13,799	5.2	94.8
June 6, 2019	261,288	44,377	17.0	83.0

Table 4: February 14, 2019 Absence and Attendance Rate, by School Level

School Level	Population	Absent 2/14/19		Daily Attendance Rate
	N	n	%	%
Elementary	107,641	8,592	8.0	92.0
Middle	53,352	9,522	17.8	82.2
High	71,143	22,619	31.8	68.2
Multi	24,105	2,418	10.0	90.0
Center	6,727	3,059	45.5	54.5
Total	262,968	46,210	17.6	82.4

Table 5: February 14, 2019 Absence and Attendance Rate, by City

School Physical Location	Total	Absent 2/14/19		Daily Attendance Rate
	N	n	%	%
Coconut Creek	9,489	3,109	32.8	67.2
Coral Springs	28,343	9,138	32.2	67.8
Parkland	6,665	1,977	29.7	70.3
Cooper City	8,908	2,487	27.9	72.1
Hallandale Beach	3,044	686	22.5	77.5
Davie	15,765	3,236	20.5	79.5
Oakland Park	4,732	964	20.4	79.6
Plantation	11,724	2,195	18.7	81.3
Fort Lauderdale	21,326	3,707	17.4	82.6
Hollywood	25,289	3,796	15.0	85.0
Miramar	18,839	2,831	15.0	85.0
Lauderhill	7,703	1,139	14.8	85.2
Deerfield Beach	6,531	816	12.5	87.5
Lauderdale Lakes	5,982	747	12.5	87.5
Tamarac	5,324	639	12.0	88.0
Margate	6,156	718	11.7	88.3
Pompano Beach	13,567	1,550	11.4	88.6
Sunrise	9,445	1,078	11.4	88.6
Weston	16,275	1,819	11.2	88.8
Southwest Ranches	2,472	265	10.7	89.3
Pembroke Pines	25,511	2,663	10.4	89.6
Dania Beach	1,451	112	7.7	92.3
North Lauderdale	5,740	390	6.8	93.2
Pembroke Park	1,171	80	6.8	93.2
Wilton Manors	1,072	67	6.3	93.7
Virtual	444	1	0.2	99.8
Total	262,968	46,210	17.6	82.4

## SCHOOL LEVEL ATTENDANCE INFORMATION IN 2018-19

Three years of detailed attendance information at the school level, including absence by type, students with 10 or more unexcused absences, students with 15 or more total absences, the average daily attendance rate, and the average number of absences per student, are available in Appendix H.

### SUMMARY

#### Overall Trends in Attendance

- The District's average daily attendance rate decreased by 0.3 percentage points from 2016-17 (94.1%) to 2018-19 (93.8%) (see Figure 1 and Appendix A).
- Attendance was lower for high schools (93.1%) compared to elementary (94.9%), middle (95.4%), and multi-level schools (95.2%). Attendance at centers was the lowest (65.6%) (see Figure 1 and Appendix A).
- Students enrolled at centers missed an average of 47 days during the 2018-19 school year. On average, high school students missed 12 days, elementary school students missed 9 days, and middle school students and multi-level school students missed 8 days during the same time period (see Figure 2 and Appendix B).
- Black, Hispanic, and White students all had similar average daily attendance rates (93.7%, 93.8%, and 93.9%, respectively) in the 2018-19 school year, while in all three years, Asian students had the greatest average daily attendance rate (see Table 1 and Appendix C).

#### Attendance Type in 2018-19

- *Perfect attendance:* Multi-level schools had the highest percentage of students with perfect attendance (12.6%), followed by middle schools (8.4%), elementary schools (6.7%), and high schools (6.0%). Centers had the lowest percentage of students with perfect attendance (4.8%; see Table 2).
- *Fifteen or more absences:* Centers had the highest percentage of students with 15 or more absences (78.1%). High schools had the next highest (27.9%), followed by elementary (17.9%), multi-level (16.8%) and middle schools (14.8%; see Table 2).
- *Unexcused absences by school level:* Centers had the highest percent of unexcused absences (90.5%), followed by multi-level schools (60.2%). The lowest percent of unexcused absences was in middle schools (39.2%; see Figure 3 and Appendix D).
- *Unexcused absences by race/ethnicity:* Black students had a higher percent of unexcused absences (67.8%), compared to Hispanic students (54.9%), and White students (39.7%; see Figure 4 and Appendix E).

### **Attendance Type and Achievement in 2018-19**

- Students who had the majority of their absences excused performed slightly better on both reading and mathematics assessments than did students who had the majority of their absences unexcused (see Figures 5 and 6 and Appendix F).

### **Attendance Categories in 2018-19**

- Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (11.3%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.9%), high (23.1%), and centers (80.1%; see Figure 6 and Appendix G).

## **Discussion**

The Student Services Department, responsible for monitoring attendance and initiating policy change, has taken the following actions to address attendance in the past year:

### **Training Teachers and Support Staff for Attendance Recordkeeping**

Prior to the first day of school in August 2018, all Broward Schools principals were provided with access to an online training to share with all teachers. The training was delivered from the Brainshark platform where completion of learner sessions can be monitored. There were 8,164 unique users that viewed the presentation during the 2018/19 school year. The teacher workforce includes more than 15,000 teachers. Accuracy for recording attendance relies on consistent reporting methodology for each student's daily attendance codes, every school day in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and every class period in grades 6-12.

### **Attendance Symposium 2018**

On September 12, 2018, during Attendance Awareness Month, the Student Services Department hosted an Attendance Symposium with more than 600 attendees from the community. The program was designed to engage parents, community partners, and school staff with strategies intended to increase regular attendance, define chronic absenteeism, and share effective practices from schools within the District that have shown improvement in attendance by reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing the percentage of students with regular attendance. The event was recorded by BECON-TV and is available for review by the public at [becon.eduvision.tv](http://becon.eduvision.tv).

### **Attendance Plan included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

Each school in the District is required to complete a School Improvement Plan (SIP). Attendance Plans are a required component in the SIP because of the strong correlation between regular

attendance and academic success. Data provided to each school for the SIP mirrors data collected by the State of Florida for ESSA and further categorizes student populations as:

- Satisfactory Attendance/Regular Attenders: 0 – 4.9% absences based on enrollment
- At-Risk Attendance: 5 – 9.9% absences based on enrollment
- Chronic Absenteeism: 10 – 19.9% absences based on enrollment
- Severe Chronic Absenteeism: 20% or more absences based on enrollment

These categories are useful for school leaders and community members in identifying which grade levels have the highest needs for student & family engagement, parental support, or connections to additional services through the District or community partners. While a relatively small percentage of students fall into the Severe Chronic Absenteeism category, this is also where schools are likely to find students and families that may need support from a school social worker or a family therapist due to additional stressors. Data specific to each school is available in Appendix G.

All schools in BCPS have staff attend training sessions hosted by the Office of Service Quality and Office of School Performance & Accountability. There were four training sessions in 2018/19 where the Attendance Program was available for direct support to staff that had questions or concerns about their school's attendance. Specific feedback was provided to every school in November and February from the Attendance Coordinator.

### **Attendance Awareness Activities**

During the 2018/19 school year, the Miami Marlins and Florida Panthers continued partnerships with the BCPS Attendance Office. Students with excellent attendance continued to be recognized and offered incentives with support from these organizations to support the District's goal to improve student attendance. Parents were notified through the ParentLink system by voicemail, email, and text messages.

At the end of marking periods during the National Hockey League (NHL) season, students with excellent attendance were included in robocall messages from the BCPS Attendance Office recognizing their good attendance, offering discounted tickets and free parking at the BB&T Center for a Florida Panthers hockey game. No purchases were required to receive the recognition via robocall for maintaining good attendance.

The Miami Marlins and BCPS Attendance Office recognized students and parents that had perfect attendance through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018/19. Voucher codes for each K-12 student that met eligibility were provided to the Attendance Office for distribution in an email to parents that could be redeemed for two free game tickets. Just over 16,000 students met eligibility and more than 2,500 voucher codes were redeemed during the 2019 baseball season for this partnership.

The BCPS Attendance Office maintains a Twitter account [@BCPS\\_180](https://twitter.com/BCPS_180) that is designed to share important information about attendance to the District's stakeholders. The account is

maintained throughout the year, including summer months. Messages are designed to promote regular attendance, educate stakeholders about awareness of chronic absenteeism, how chronic absenteeism impacts an individual and an entire classroom, and where to find resources to help reduce chronic absenteeism in your school. Principals are encouraged to follow [@BCPS\\_180](#) and share useful messages that can help promote attendance at their school. Parents, teachers, and community partners may find useful information through the history of the account.

### **Other District Policies and Recommendations from the District Attendance Committee**

The 2017/18 edition of the Student Attendance Report provided data that helped steer decisions related to the Student Code of Conduct Committee, the District Calendar Committee, and revisions to the Progression Plan (Policy 6000.1).

The Student Code of Conduct is guided by District policies and informs parents and students of responsibilities for regular school attendance. The Attendance Policy is represented in section 1 of the 2019-2022 version of [The Code Book for Student Conduct](#).

The District's Calendar Committee meets monthly to consider calendar development and options for upcoming school years. Student attendance data is often considered for: the day of the week that a school year starts; average daily attendance (ADA) before and after holidays or storms; and more recently, how attendance was impacted at each school in the District after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

*Policy 6000.1: Progression Plan* was revised after review of a section that allows students taking a high school course to average their semester grades if the student fails an entire semester. Credit for a course in this section of policy is directed by Florida statute 1003.436(2) which allows school district policy to include additional requirements for attendance (and other performance indicators) to be successfully completed by students to be eligible for this grade averaging. When considering a limit to the number and classification of absences, attendance data was used to measure possible outcomes and how student demographics would be affected if unexcused absences were the only attendance metric associated with these additional requirements. If language limited only unexcused absences, policy would have disproportionately impacted students who are Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, and American Indian. To ensure that policy is equitable, the revised requirement for attendance provides that the student *"is absent no more than 10% of the instructional time during the failed semester in the course requiring grade averaging."* This policy was approved at the School Board Meeting on July 23, 2019.

### **Perfect Attendance Recognition**

The BCPS Attendance Office recognizes that encouraging perfect attendance might encourage parents to send their child to school when the student is sick, putting other students at risk for an illness that will cause more absences. A core ingredient of school-based attendance plans is

to promote “Good and Improved Attendance” and schools may recognize students for attendance as determined by school leadership.

Each year, there are students that have maintained perfect attendance for multiple years. The District Attendance Committee has been recognizing parents and students that have maintained this remarkable achievement at an event called “An Evening Among the Stars.” This event usually has about 20-25 fifth graders that had perfect attendance for every day of school from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Representing middle school, there are more than 200 students that attended every school day from grades 6 – 8. Finally, high school students include more than 60 students that attended every school day from grades 9 – 12. While perfect attendance is not a core ingredient of the school-based attendance plan, families that are fortunate enough to have a child that is able to maintain good health and attend every school day is worthy of recognition. In addition to school-level perfect attendance, the District Attendance Committee also recognizes high school seniors as “Best in Class” who maintained perfect attendance in Broward Schools from day 1 of kindergarten through their senior year. “Best in Class” for the 2018 event included six students and in 2019 the committee honored eight students. For the 2019/20 school year, the event will be hosted for the ninth time in May 2020.

### **Increased Mental Health Support in Broward Schools**

Broward County Public Schools added Recovery to the Student Support Initiatives Division during the 2018/19 school year. Attendance remains a frequent reason for referral to a school social worker or family therapist. Throughout the 2018/19 school year, there was an increase in services provided to students and families out of necessity and because there were more professionals available to meet those needs.

As a result of the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Broward Schools, led by the District Mental Health Leadership Team, have obtained additional federal and state grant funding to increase the number of mental health staff available directly to students and families to address trauma and continuing stressors that exist in our community. For students, parents, teachers, and staff there are daily reminders of the violence that occurred on that day, other acts of violence in our community, and national attention in the news from mass shootings that persists throughout the United States. Events such as these have changed the sense of safety that exists in a school building and has a direct impact on student attendance.

The BCPS Attendance Office is a program within the Student Services Department. In addition to the Attendance Program, this department also includes the following programs: Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Services, Family Counseling, Foster Care Services, Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team (HEART), and School Social Work Services. Throughout the 2018/19 school year, there were more than 180 mental health professionals providing services to students and families in our schools from the Student Services Department. The District Mental Health Leadership Team includes representation from Student Services, Exceptional Student Learning



Support (which includes school psychologists), School Counseling, and the Employee Assistance Program which provides supports for staff.

### **Attendance Policy 5.5 and Additional Attendance Information**

Policy 5.5: Attendance is available in English, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese at:

<https://www.browardschools.com/attendance>

For further information regarding attendance policies and/or initiatives please contact Phillip Shaver, Coordinator, District Attendance, at 754-321-1550.

## DETAILED APPENDICES

(Available online at <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>)

### **Appendix A:**

Average daily attendance rate by school level, 2016-17 through 2018-19

### **Appendix B:**

Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2016-17 through 2018-19

### **Appendix C:**

Average daily attendance rate by student demographics, 2016-17 through 2018-19

### **Appendix D:**

Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, by school level, 2016-17 through 2018-19

### **Appendix E:**

Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, by race/ethnicity, 2016-17 through 2018-19

### **Appendix F:**

Student achievement by excused and unexcused absences, by school level, 2018-19

### **Appendix G:**

Chronic absenteeism by school level and by school, 2017-18 through 2018-19

### **Appendix H:**

Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, students with 10 or more unexcused absences, 15 or more total absences, average daily attendance rate, and average number of absences per student, by school 2016-17 through 2018-19

## References

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- Jordan, P.W. & Miller, R. (2017, September). Who's in. Chronic absenteeism under the every student succeeds act. Retrieved on September 20, 2019 from <https://www.future-ed.org/whos-in-chronic-absenteeism-under-the-every-student-succeeds-act/>.
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