Analyzing Absenteeism in Correlation to Student Achievement and Behavior

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors impacting student absenteeism.

Keywords: achievement, absenteeism, achievement, AYP (adequate yearly progress), interventions

Introduction:
Chronic absenteeism is most prevalent among low-income students. Note that gender and ethnicity is not a factor with this. According to research, the youngest and the oldest students tend to often have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism, with students attending most regularly in third through fifth grades. In a nationally representative data set, chronic absence in kindergarten was correlated with lower academic performance in first grade. Note that in lower income families, the impact is twice as great for students. In middle school, chronic absenteeism begins to rise and continues through 12th grade with seniors with the highest rate of all.

Missing school matters in the education of our students. Chronic absenteeism increases achievement gaps at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Studies show that students reared in poverty benefit the most from being in school, one of the most effective strategies for providing pathways out of poverty with students that come daily. This alone will drive up achievement, high school graduation, and college attainment rates. A Baltimore study found a correlation between sixth grade attendance and the percentage of students graduating (Balfanz, 2012)

According to the Oregon Department of Education, research indicates that students who attend school regularly perform better academically, regardless of the reason for the absence. Most schools focus primarily on excused versus unexcused absences in order to be in compliance with state law. In their study, they compared student groups from thirteen sample schools, and their variation in excused and unexcused absences. As stated before, schools vary widely on how they address excused and unexcused absences. For the thirteen schools that reported data on excused and unexcused absences, most absences were recorded as excused. Principals are permitted by Oregon law to exercise considerable discretion when characterizing an absence as
excused or unexcused. Most schools analyzed in this study reported a smaller percentage of student absences as being unexcused. Unexcused absences include all of those absences not covered under the excused absence policy. Oregon law also includes policies for students who have “irregular attendance.” What is irregular attendance? It is defined as “eight unexcused one-half day absences in any four week period which the school is in session”.

As the Oregon Department of Education continued their research, they found a broad variation in what schools consider an excused or unexcused absence. Two schools considered all absences excused due to the age of the students. Many schools granted excused absences, especially if the parents were contacted and provided a reason. One school excluded vacation as a valid reason and only accepted illness related absences as excused (Oregon Department of Education, 2016).

In this study, the Oregon Department of Education also concluded that certain student groups, like economically disadvantaged students, students with a race or ethnicity other than White, students and English Language Learners are more likely to have unexcused absences than their peers. Moreover, this study indicated that chronically absent students have poorer academic outcomes and graduate at lower rates as compared to their peers (Oregon Department of Education, 2016).

Students miss school for a variety of reasons including the following: 1) students who will not attend school to avoid unsafe conditions, harassment, embarrassment, and bullying; 2) students who cannot attend school due to family responsibilities, illness, housing instability, the need to work or involvement with the juvenile justice system; and 3) students who do not attend school due to family values, or they rather participate in another activity, or nothing stops them from skipping school (Balfanz, 2012).

**What is Chronic Absenteeism?**

Even though there is no standard definition for chronic absenteeism, usually it is based on the total days of school missed, including excused and unexcused absences. Evidence indicates that the number of days a student misses is essential and not why they missed school. Chronic absenteeism is not comparative to truancy. Truancy is defined as a certain number or certain frequency of unexcused absences. Truancy numbers typically underestimate total absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is often defined as missing ten percent or more school days, which is equivalent to eighteen days a year. Several states define chronic absenteeism as missing more than twenty days, or a month of school. Some states define chronic absenteeism as absent for fifteen days; missing 20% or more of school; or 40 or more days. (Balfanz, 2012)

**Chronic Absenteeism is Not Routinely Reported:**

School districts and states are not required to report chronic absenteeism. In accordance with No Child Left Behind, most states choose to report the average daily attendance of elementary and middle schools in addition to the achievement tests in mathematics and English grades 3-8. Average daily attendance, according to Balfanz, masks more than it reveals. It is very possible for a school to have 90% average daily attendance and still have as many as 40% of its students chronically absent because on different days different students are in school. Chronic absenteeism is not included in various federal student and school surveys. Only a few states report on chronic absenteeism, and only six states: Georgia, Florida, Maryland, Nebraska, Oregon and Rhode Island—with only four of them making school level data accessible on state websites-Maryland, Georgia, Florida, and Rhode Island. Several states, such as California and New York, do not collect the underlying individual attendance data needed to calculate chronic absenteeism (Balfanz, 2012).

Because chronic absenteeism is not routinely measured, it cannot be identified and noted throughout U.S. schools. States also measure chronic absenteeism differently. For example, Oregon and Rhode Island measure how many students miss 10% or more of enrolled school days. In a 180 day school year, this means students
would be counted as chronically absent if they missed 18 or more days. On the other hand, Maryland, Florida, and Nebraska report the number and percentage of students who miss 21 days or more of school. Maryland and Florida restrict their counts to students who are enrolled for the entire year, while Rhode Island counts any student enrolled for at least 90 days. Georgia and Maryland are the only states that provide data on the number and percent of students with good attendance, those who miss five or fewer days in Georgia and fewer than five days in Maryland. Georgia and Nebraska report the number of students who miss 15 days or more of school (Balfanz, 2012).

In analyzing the data reported in this article, students nationwide are missing lots of school. For example, in Nebraska, the state with the lowest reported rate, 18,000 students a year are missing more than a month of school. Florida’s reported rate of 10% is equivalent to more than 300,000 students a year missing more than a month. In Georgia, 164,000 students are missing more than three weeks of school. Chronic absenteeism is just not an urban issue but a rural issue. In high poverty urban school districts: Baltimore, New York City, and Providence, students are missing 21, 20 days or 18 days respectively, which is equivalent to one-fifth and one third of students are not attending school regularly (Balfanz, 2012).

In observing and summing up the data in Balfanz’s article, the following questions must be answered:

- How many students are chronically absent, missing either 10%, or more than a month, of school?
- When are students chronically absent?
- Which subgroups are missing school?

**How many students are chronically absent?** Several key points can be inferred from Balfanz’s article. Chronic absenteeism starts early in kindergarten. Absenteeism rates improve over the elementary grades. By the time, students matriculate into high school chronic absenteeism increases. The highest rate is often observed in 12th grade indicates that while students who drop out often are chronically absent before they do; graduating students are not immune from missing significant amounts of school (. (Balfanz, 2012).

**Who is missing school? Which subgroups are missing schools?** Rates of chronic absenteeism are similar across gender and ethnic background; however, it is consistently higher among economically disadvantaged students and special education classes. There is not a significant difference in the rate of males and females attending school; also, there are significant differences across urban, suburban, town, and rural areas. There is also a strong correlation between poverty and chronic absenteeism. In 2011, chronic absentee rates for Maryland students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch were 10.9% in elementary schools, 15.8% in middle schools, and 30.8% in high schools. Chronic absentee rates were three times higher among economically disadvantaged students in middle and high schools and at least twice as high in elementary schools. In looking at data in Oregon, Nebraska, Maryland, and Georgia, one can conclude that students who live in poverty attend school less frequently than those who do not (Balfanz, 2012).

In retrospect, longer and consistent attendance in school will lead to higher achievement. For example, the Georgia Department of Education stated that just 3% improvement in attendance or just five additional days would have resulted in 55,000 students to pass the end of year standardized tests in English, reading, or math in grades 3-8. The greatest impact was for students who missed 5-10 days of school suggesting that missing even a week or two weeks has a significant negative impact on achievement (Balfanz, 2012). Students’ attendance, even in middle school, is predictive of the likelihood that students will be on track in ninth grade to graduate from high school within four years.

According to Baker, truancy or unexcused absences from school are highly correlated to delinquent activity and significant negative behavior in adults which include: vandalism, substance abuse, gang activity, and involvement in criminal activities. There is also a correlation between truant teenagers as they become adults. They are more likely to have poorer health and mental health, lower paying jobs, more reliance on welfare...
support, increased likelihood of incarceration, problematic children, and an increased chance of living in poverty (Baker, n.d.).

Left unaddressed, truancy at any age, particularly preteen and teenage years, can have significant negative effects on the student, schools, and society. Strategies that are effective to intervene with chronic truants and address the root causes of truancy are essential. (Baker, n.d.)

According to Baker, national reviews of discipline issues indicate that public school principals identified student absenteeism, class cutting, and tardiness as the top discipline problems in their schools. According to research, the correlates of truancy fall into four broad categories: family factors, school factors, economic influences, and student variables. **Family factors** include lack of guidance or parental supervision, domestic violence, poverty, lack of awareness of attendance laws, differing attitudes toward education, and drug or alcohol abuse in the home. More students are caring for elderly grandparents and younger siblings while parents are at work. Some are supporters of their family by engaging in illegal activities. Some students do not have appropriate clothes or supplies; in addition to speech impediments or poor reading ability. In reference to **school factors**, these include class size, school size, teacher attitudes, and lack of attention to cultural diversity and learning styles are among the many factors causing student absenteeism. Schools must improve their procedures for dealing with chronic absenteeism and may not have meaning consequences available for truant youth, such as out of school suspension. **Economic influences** include employed students, high mobility rates, parents who hold multiple jobs, lack of affordable transportation and childcare; and single parent homes. Finally, student variables include substance abuse, lack of understanding of attendance laws, mental health challenges, poor health, and lack of social competence (Baker, n.d.)

Chronic absenteeism increases the school drop-out rates. According to Roby (2003), one study of African American males concluded that of the student’s truant from elementary and high school, 75% did not graduate. “Poor attendance averages in school buildings was determined to be one of the factors leading to student test scores much lower than classmates”. (Roby, pg 2) Roby (2003) suggests that student attendance should be charted and monitored weekly, since high attendance rates are indicators of effective schools. (Roby, 2003)

Other studies indicate that high school drop-outs have fewer job prospects and make lower salaries. Baker states that the financial impact of truancy on students, and their future is critical. The following results must be considered: a) less educated workforce; b) higher daytime crime rates; c) cost of social services for families of children who are habitually truant; and d) business loss because of youth who shoplift and just “hang out.” Truancy, in turn, establishes poor communities and the loss of federal and state education funding (Baker, n.d.). Truancy is the pathway to prison; research shows that those involved in the juvenile justice system had a past history of chronic absenteeism.

**Chronic Elementary Absenteeism:**

Children must be in the habit of attending school every day. Research shows that “going to school regularly in the early years is critical, especially for those in poverty who are less likely to have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom”. Chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of 5th grade. (Bruner, 2011)

Improving school attendance improves success in school. (Bruner, 2011)

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that impact student attendance. Moreover, the purpose was also to compare the demographics of the students: age, gender, location, and parent dispositions. Survey data was used to address the research questions posed in this study. In this study and investigation, the researcher posed the following questions:
1. Student attendance and its relationship to student achievement in SC schools will be reviewed using the following research questions:

   a) Is there a significant, positive relationship between student attendance and student achievement as measured by kindergarten assessments?
   b) Are there other factors: family, school, and economic influences that contribute to student absenteeism?

Participants:

For this investigation, researchers gathered data from participants’ attendance records and scores. The participants represented various ability and cognitive levels. The charts included in this article give a description of the participants, demographics and grade.

Located in an affluent district, Elementary A has less than five hundred students (335 in 2016) and about two teachers per grade level. Recently, there have been a few shifts in administration and high teacher turnover. In 2016, Elementary A had a principal for sixteen years. Since her retirement, there have been two other administrators. Approximately ninety-four percent of the student body participates in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF, homeless, foster, or migrant. Eleven percent of students have disabilities, while only four percent are gifted and talented. Two percent are retained.

Over half of the faculty has advanced degrees, and fifty percent are on continuing contracts. Students and teachers have a high attendance rate. Even though Elementary A serves a poor rural community, the district is affluent and diverse. It has many resources and extensive professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Within this study, the author focused primarily on one kindergarten class. The class has eighteen students; only one student in the class has been retained. It is his second year in kindergarten; in addition, he is a special education student that receives pull out instruction daily for forty five minutes. Out of the eighteen students only four enrolled in Pre-K. For many of the students, this is their first experience in school.

Data Preparation and Analysis:

Of the total number respondents, ten are female and eight are male. The majority of students were African American or Caucasian. Most were enrolled in a Pre-K program prior to matriculation into Kindergarten. Students’ ages range from five to six years old. The school in which these students are enrolled is rural. However, the school district is affluent, and many resources are available to teachers and to students. Within this particular school, there are two kindergarten classes and one Pre-K class.

Using SurveyMonkey, parents of these students were distributed surveys, in which they answered questions targeting the reasons or causes of why their children were absent. The survey had twenty questions; 19 of which were on a Likert scale. One question was open ended. Questions focused on the following: student demographics, student and parent dispositions towards the school, the parent’s disposition about school mandatory attendance, parent and school relations in regards to effective communication, home family life and challenges, child safety at school, the need for community support for parents, teaching styles, the presence or absence of academic difficulty, teacher/staff and student relationships, student and classmates relationships, and parental additional comments.

Results were returned and entered into Microsoft Excel. Afterwards, the data was interpreted and reported in charts and graphs.
Kindergarten Attendance Report
Annual Days Present, Absent, and Tardy 2017-2018

Kindergarten Students
Excused, Unexcused Absences and Tardies 2017-2018
### Kindergarten Attendance Reports

**Individual Absences and Tardies per Quarter and Semester 2017-2018**

#### Student A

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 5     |
| Total Tardies   | 0  | 4  | 4  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 5     |

#### Student B

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 4  | 6  | 10 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 11    |
| Total Tardies   | 2  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 2     |

#### Student C

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 2  | 1  | 3  | 4  | 1  | 5  | 8     |
| Total Tardies   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0     |
### Student D

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 2  | 3  | 5  | 7  | 0  | 7  | 12    |
| Tardies| 2  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 4     |

### Student E

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 2  | 7  | 9  | 11 | 4  | 15 | 24    |
| Tardies| 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 2     |

### Student F

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 4  | 5     |
| Tardies| 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0     |

### Student G

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 2  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 4     |
| Tardies| 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 4     |

### Student H

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 1  | 4  | 5  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 5     |
| Tardies| 2  | 6  | 8  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 9     |

### Student I

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Absence| 7  | 4  | 11 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 14    |
| Tardies| 1  | 2  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 4     |
| Student | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| J       |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q1      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2      |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total   |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student J

| Total Absences | Moved to Another Class |
|----------------|------------------------|
|                |                        |

| Total Tardies  |
|----------------|
|                |

| Student K      | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Q1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total          |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student K

Total Absences 3 2 5 3 4 7 12
Total Tardies 7 1 8 0 0 0 18

| Student L      | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Q1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total          |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student L

Total Absences 12 6 18 11 4 15 33
Total Tardies 0 2 2 0 0 0 17

| Student M      | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Q1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total          |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student M

Total Absences 12 6 18 11 4 15 33
Total Tardies 0 2 2 0 0 0 17

| Student N      | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Q1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total          |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student N

Total Absences 0 0 0 0 1 1 1
Total Tardies 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

| Student O      | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Q1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q3             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Q4             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| S2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Total          |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Student O

Total Absences 7 1 8 2 3 5 13
Total Tardies 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
Student P

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 1  | 1  | 2  | 4  | 2  | 6  | 8     |
| Total Tardies   | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 7     |

Student Q

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 2     |
| Total Tardies   | 3  | 1  | 4  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 5     |

Student R (new student: enrolled in May 2018)

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 1  | 2  | 3  | 2  | 0  | 2  | 5     |
| Total Tardies   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0     |

Student S

|       | Q1 | Q2 | S1 | Q3 | Q4 | S2 | Total |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Total Absences | 4  | 2  | 6  | 2  | 3  | 5  | 11    |
| Total Tardies   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1     |
Excused, Bus, and Unexcused Tardies
Kindergarten Class 2017-2018

Key: BTRD - bus tardy, ETRD - excused tardy

Kindergarten Student Absences with Parent Notes 2017-2018

| Student | Number of Parent Notes for 2017-2018 | Number of BTRD (bus tardies) | Number of ETRD (excused tardies) | Birthday |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Student A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12-1-2011 |
| Student B | 7 | 0 | 0 | 4-27-2012 |
| Student C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3-22-2012 |
| Student D | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5-18-2012 |
| Student E | 7 | 0 | 0 | 12-20-2011 |
| Student F | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9-20-2011 |
| Student G | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8-24-2012 |
| Student H | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10-23-2011 |
| Student I | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5-8-2012 |
| Student J | Moved to other class | Moved to other class | Moved to other class | Moved to other class |
| Student K | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6-26-2012 |
| Student L | 3 | 0 | 0 | 12-6-2011 |
| Student M | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8-28-2012 |
| Student N | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3-30-2012 |
| Student O | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5-5-2011 |
| Student P | 3 | 0 | 1 | 11-3-2011 |
| Student Q | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1-13-2012 |
| Student R (new student) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9-28-2011 |
| Student S | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10-22-2011 |
Kindergarten Student Demographics: Gender
2017-2018

Ages of Kindergarten Students 2017-2018
Most of my students live in two parent homes; some are married and others are not. Four families reside in public housing. (2 male students and 2 female students) All of the students, except for one, live in the local town where the school is located.

Locations of Kindergarten Students’ Residences 2017-2018
The school is located in Town A; however, one student lives in an adjoining town. Both towns are rural.

Dates of Absences throughout the Year 2017-2018
Kindergarten Class

Dates of Tardies throughout the Year 2017-2018
Kindergarten Class
The chart below shows the significant impact upon instruction, in terms of time, when students are absent from school.
**Attendance Average Rates**

| Attendance Average Rate (%) | Instructional Hours Per School Year | Instructional Hours of Absence Per School Year |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 100                         | 360,000                             | 0                                             |
| 99                          | 356,400                             | 3,600                                         |
| 98                          | 352,800                             | 7,200                                         |
| 97                          | 349,200                             | 10,800                                        |
| 96                          | 345,600                             | 14,400                                        |
| 95                          | 342,000                             | 18,000                                        |
| 94                          | 338,400                             | 21,600                                        |
| 93                          | 334,800                             | 25,200                                        |
| 92                          | 331,200                             | 28,800                                        |
| 91                          | 327,600                             | 32,400                                        |
| 90                          | 324,000                             | 36,000                                        |
| 89                          | 320,400                             | 39,600                                        |
| 88                          | 316,800                             | 43,200                                        |
| 87                          | 313,200                             | 46,800                                        |
| 86                          | 309,600                             | 50,400                                        |
| 85                          | 306,000                             | 54,000                                        |

Instructional Time Loss (Example: 400 students, 5 hours per day, and 180 days)

Note below for formula

**Formula for Calculations:** The formula: (number of students in the school) X (number of school days per year) X (number of actual instructional hours per day) = Average Attendance Rate (percent). Example, to get a base total number of hours for perfect attendance: if the number of students in the school equals 500, and if they all attended every school day for an entire school year (as an example let's say this particular school had 185 school days), and this school had 6 hours of actual instructional time per day, then the equation for perfect attendance (total instructional hours per school year) would be 500 x 185 x 6, which = 555,000 hours per year (100 percent attendance).

From that point, having figured the total possible hours for perfect attendance of all students, you reduce the average attendance rate by one percentage point (99%), and then you can see total instructional hours of
absence at that percentage level. To get that figure, you calculate 99% of 555,000 hours (549,450). Now you have how many total instructional hours at the 99% attendance rate, and you also have how many instructional hours of absence (555,000-549,450 = 5,500). Keep doing this for each percentage point (98%, 97%, 96%, etc.) to get the total instructional hours and total absence hours per school year for each percentage level.

**Findings:**

The highest absences appear to be in September and in March. The most tardies, on the other hand, are in March and May. September also has a high tardy rate. The two students, male and a female, had the highest absences. One is due to asthma, and the other is not clear. With the female student, it appears to be a combination of family, social, emotional and health issues.

**Conclusions:**

In short, given the strong connection among absenteeism, academic achievement, and poverty, the findings indicate that one of the most effective strategies for closing the achievement gap will be a concerted effort to enable and to ensure that high poverty students attend school regularly from Pre-k to grade 12. We must reexamine assumptions about what has and has not worked to close the achievement, graduation, and post-secondary enrollment gaps.

➢ Attendance is an important factor in a student’s success, but it may or may not negatively impact a student’s progress. In this study, two students, PB and SM, had high absenteeism. But both students were on kindergarten level, and they progressed consistently. JJ is the only student who was a low achiever.

➢ Behavior is also another important factor in a student’s achievement, success, and progress. Behavior may or may not negatively impact a student’s progress. Within this study, the two most violent, disruptive, and aggressive students were classified differently academically. Student TH, academically gifted or a high achiever, had excellent progress reports, report cards, and attendance, KRA, BAS, and Reading Inventory scores. But like, AL, his behavior is erratic. Both students scream, attack students, knock over or push furniture, refuse to follow directives, and fall out on the floor. The difference between AL and TH is that TH growls and repeats statements: “I want to get in the group.” or “I want my I-pad.” repeatedly. Both students have a mean demeanor when they are angry, nor do they like to take responsibility or acknowledge their actions.

➢ Services were requested for both students and Enrich RTI plans are being documented. Interventions do not appear to be effective. Medical consultations may need to be suggested to parents. Counseling services are definitely needed. For TH, this behavior also occurred in Pre-K, and according to the former teacher and staff, the behavior was worse. Because AL was not in Pre-K, it is not known how the student interacted with others, but the family has a history of violence, according to the school counselor.

**Implications and recommendations:**

The implications of this study are clear.

Moreover, attendance, behavior and grades are a strong indication of a student’s progress and predicted future progress. It would be interesting to observe how student behavior would change if parents were required to sit in their child’s classes if they misbehaved, or if a behavior specialist was assigned to the students that misbehaved.

● Students attend class more frequently when teachers use resources that reflect students’ backgrounds or the curriculum is culturally responsive.

● Students attend class more frequently when learning includes students’ input or interest about what and how topics are discussed in class.
Students attend class more frequently when teachers make learning more relevant to their daily lives and to their cultural background.

Students attend class more frequently when teachers care about students’ learning.

Students attend class more frequently when students feel comfortable asking teachers questions about what they are learning.

Students attend class more frequently when the culture of the school encourages students to succeed academically.

Students attend class more frequently when they feel a sense of belonging in the school.

Students attend class more frequently when the teaching supports hands on learning.

Some of the primary reasons students are chronically absent for the following:

- Teachers convey low expectations to students.
- Teachers do not believe that all students can learn.
- Learning is not relevant to real life situations.
- Lack of positive relations with teachers.

Recommendations:

Parent and student support groups from outside sources or the guidance counselor need to be implemented into the school and into the community to alleviate problems and stresses of daily life that will cause absences. Parenting classes, which include GED and college credits, will enable parents to further their education; to assist their children more effectively with homework; and to improve their job selections.

Limitations:

Although this study is pertinent for gauging issues of programmatic structure, the study did not account for other variables (e.g. larger populations at elementary schools in other regions). Among the many possible directions for future study of student attendance include the following: 1) the need for additional studies about student attendance and achievement on a larger scale studies to determine the trends discovered here are consistent among this population at large. Once a larger representation is created, additional studies of the many veins of this singular study can be aptly employed.

Other data or factors that could impact student progress or success include the following: teacher attendance, staff morale, teacher education level, parents’ education and income levels, demographics of neighboring and current schools, and the turnover rates of administration and faculty.

A longitudinal study of this same group of students from kindergarten to high school would also be very beneficial as well.

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Appendix A: Improving Student Attendance Survey

Link: https://goo.gl/forms/oxjWBJxcFpdhrCBz1

To analyze and to prevent chronic absenteeism.

1. What is your child’s gender?
2. What is your child’s age?
3. What is your child’s ethnicity?
4. The following questions are based on a Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree.

My child enjoys school.

1. My child is safe at school.
2. The school communicates effectively about my child’s attendance.
3. It’s ok to take a day off now and again.
4. There are issues at home that are preventing my child from attending regularly or on time.
5. The school seeks my views and listens to my concerns.
6. The school understands and responds to my child’s needs.
7. The school deals with any incidents of bullying effectively.
8. I need support to help me in improving my child’s attendance at school.
9. Progressive teaching methods are used.
10. Incidences of bullying are noticed and dealt with.
11. Academic difficulties cause my child to miss school.
12. Incidents of bullying cause my child to miss school.
13. Conflict with the teacher or other staff members causes my child to miss school.
14. Conflict with other students causes my child to miss school.
15. My school recognizes and rewards students for excellent attendance.
16. Open ended questions:

Suggestions for improving student attendance:

Please enter any additional comments about your child’s attendance at school: