

PUBLIC SCHOOLS of  
**BROOKLINE**



# Attendance Update

11/14/2024

# Attendance Goals

- To support **all** students in arriving to school on time every day.
- To accurately record the attendance of every student every day.
- To respond to attendance challenges at the same (early) time across schools using the best practices.
- To create consistency in how we communicate attendance expectations to all staff, students, and families across the district.

# Recording Attendance

- Accurately recording the attendance of all students is critically important.
- Important to accurately categorize absences as excused or unexcused.
  - School Refusal and Family Emergency now appear as drop down options for recording attendance.



# Communication

- We include information about attendance to all families in August and upon enrollment.

**Learning how to consistently attend school and class is one of the most important skills children develop during their education.**

Students who consistently attend school are significantly more likely to perform well academically, develop meaningful relationships with students and adults, and learn important social-emotional skills (e.g., how to manage stress).

In contrast, students who have one or more absences a month are more likely to fall behind academically, feel disconnected from their peers and adults, and experience increased levels of stress, worry, and other challenging emotions. **Because of this, supporting strong attendance is among our highest priorities as a district.**

## How can we support student attendance?

- **Sleep.** Keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine. This is not always easy!
- **Screen time.** Turn off all electronics at bedtime. Have a family media plan and make sure screens are all off before bedtime.
- **Advance planning.** Avoid the morning rush! If possible, pack backpacks and prepare clothing in the evening.
- **Illnesses.** If you are not sure when to keep your child home due to illness, please contact the school nurse.
- **Anxiety and fears.** There has been a big increase in anxiety since the COVID pandemic started. If your child is having a lot of anxiety or worries about school, reach out to your child's teacher or school counselor. We have a lot of professionals who can help.
- **Vacation time, doctor's visits, and other events.** Avoid scheduling vacations and doctor's appointments while school is in session. These absences can make attending school more challenging for some children.

## What are the expectations surrounding School Attendance?

As a reminder, all students in PSB are expected to attend school every day, arrive on time every day, stay for the full school day, and attend all scheduled classes.

Massachusetts General Laws, along with policies set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE), also state that:

- All children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) must attend school.
- A student must be at school, at a school-related activity, or receiving academic instruction for at least half (50%) the school day to be counted as present.
- School districts must provide all parents/guardians with instructions for calling a designated phone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a student and the reason for the absence. In addition, parents/guardians must provide the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number so that they may be contacted during the school day so the school may call and inquire about said absence.

A student's parents and guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that they attend school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a student to attend school. The PSB District Attendance Officer reserves the right to file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian in cases of extended absences. These documents may include (but are not limited to) a 51A report for educational neglect or a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) Application for habitually truant students.

# Communication

- Families are notified when a student has reached 5 and 10 unexcused absences.
- This often includes a letter and/or a phone call/email.

To the Parent/Guardian/Caregiver of:

We are writing because [student name] has missed [x] days of school this year. As educators, we are always concerned when students miss school. Your child is an important member of the [Insert School Name] community - within and beyond their classroom! We hope they are okay!

Being in school provides students with important and unique academic, social, and emotional experiences that help support their development. Because of this, when students miss more than two days of school a month, they are more likely to experience academic and social-emotional challenges.

Our goal is to make sure that your student is well and that they continue to access their education. Although we want students to stay home when they are sick, it is important that we support students in attending as many days of school as possible. As a reminder, the Brookline School Committee Attendance policy considers all days of school missed due to vacations or non-emergency travel as unexcused absences. Don't hesitate to contact the school office, your child's teacher, counselor, administrator, or District Attendance Officer if you have any concerns about [student's name] ability to attend school every day on time. We are here to help!

**Below are some strategies that families have found helpful for supporting attendance:**

- Sleep. Keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine. This can be hard to do! We have resources that you might find helpful.
- Screen Time. Turn off all electronics at bedtime. Usually, the whole family needs to turn off all screens before bedtime.
- Anxiety and Fears. Anxiety about school is very common. Please reach out to your child's teachers and counselor if you or your child is expressing worry, anxiety, or fear about attending school.
- Advance Planning. If possible, pack backpacks and prepare clothing in the evening. We also encourage you to share any potential cultural or community events you and your child observe that may interfere with school attendance.
- Illness. If you are not sure when to keep your child home due to illness, please contact the school nurse (number).
- Vacations and Medical Appointments. Please avoid scheduling vacations and doctor's appointments while school is in session.

Sincerely,

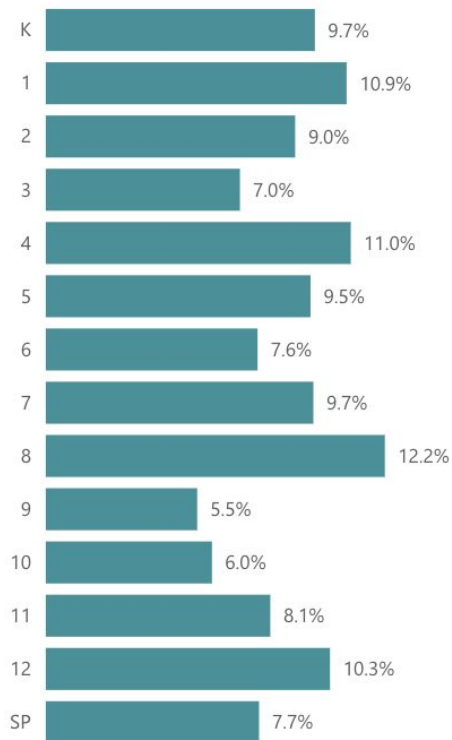
# Attendance Trends

- Chronic Absenteeism = Missing 10% or more of school days enrolled
  - 2016-2017 = 7.4%
  - 2017-2018 = 7.8%
  - 2018-2019 = 8.1%
  - 2019-2020 = 9.3%
  - 2020-2021 = 5.9%\* (Hybrid)
  - 2021-2022 = 15.1% (3.2% were 20% or more)
  - 2022-2023 = 14.5% (2.6% were 20% or more)
  - 2023-2024 = 11.5% (2.4% were 20% or more)
  - 11/12/2024 = 8.8% (2.0% are 20% or more)

Goals	
2023-2024 =	13.9%
2024-2025 =	12.7%
2025-2026 =	12.0%
2026-2027 =	11.1%

# Attendance Data

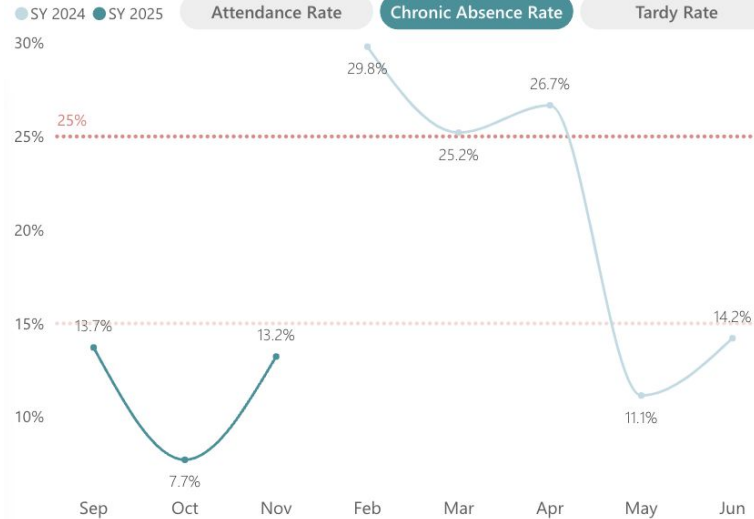
## Chronic Absence Rate



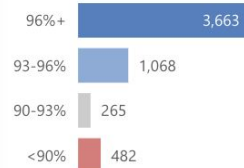
K to 8's: Range  
7.9% to 17.5%

# Attendance Data

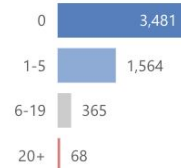
## Chronic Absence Rate by Month



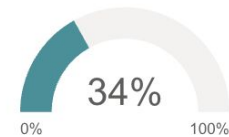
### # of Students by Attendance Tier SY 2025 Overall



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### % Unexcused Absences

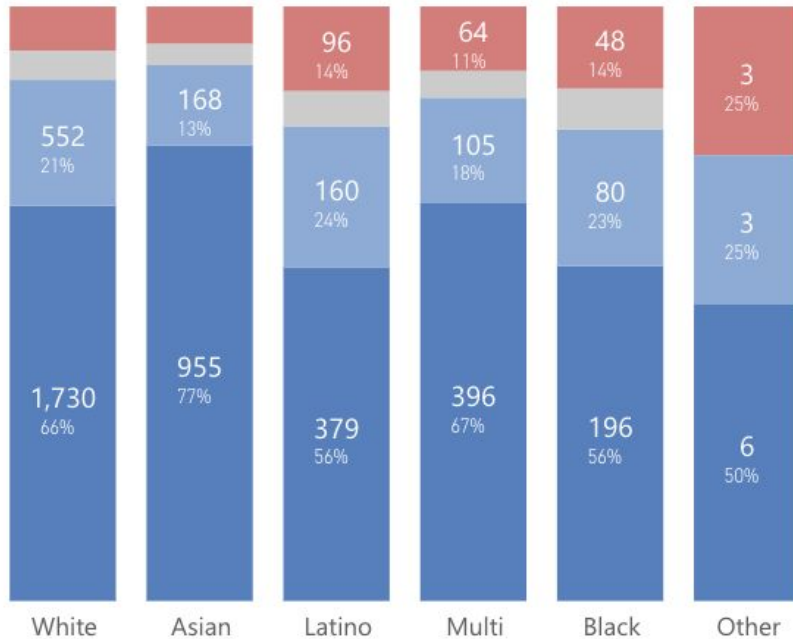




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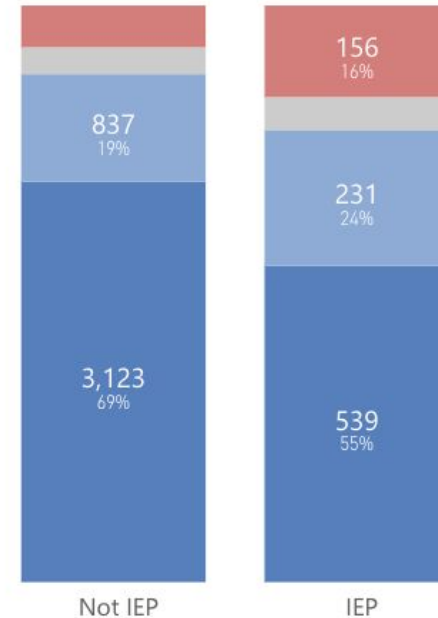
% of Total and # of Students by: Attendance

● 96%+ ● 93-96% ● 90-93% ● <90%



% of Total and # of Students by: Attendance

● 96%+ ● 93-96% ● 90-93% ● <90%



# Support, Intervention, and Response

- Early Identification, Notification, and Support
  - Attendance Teams, Running attendance reports, Sending attendance letters
    - Open Architects
    - Supportive Outreach
      - Attendance Office
      - Home Visits (development of home visit protocol)
    - Attendance Support Plans