

School attendance is a powerful predictor of student outcomes. Rhode Island defines chronic absenteeism as the percentage of students who miss 10% or more of school days during the year (or two days per month). Attending school every day is even more critical in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who is affected?

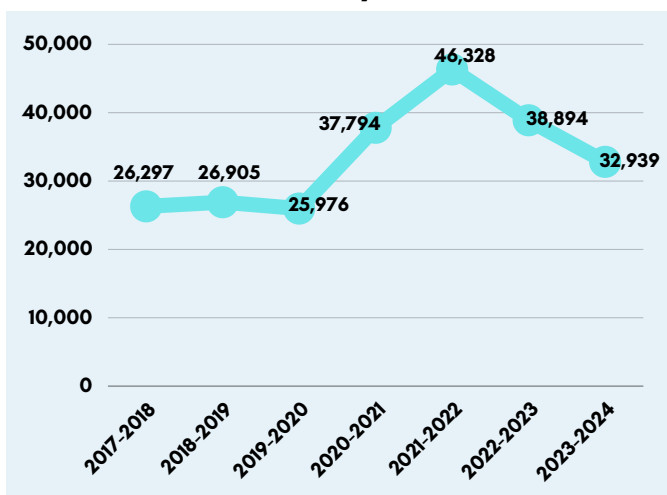
The pandemic critically impacted chronic absenteeism nationwide. In Rhode Island, 24.7% of students were chronically absent during the 2023-2024 school year. That's nearly 1 in 4 children!




Pandemic impact

While chronic absenteeism improved last school year by 4.2 percentage points from SY22-23, there is still more work to be done in Rhode Island schools.

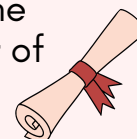
Number of Chronically Absent Students




Why does it matter?

 Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are less likely to read on grade level by the third grade.


Chronic absenteeism is the single strongest predictor of dropping out before graduation.



 Students who drop out of school are less likely to succeed in a career. In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, over a lifetime, \$1 million more than a student who dropped out.

Chronic absenteeism is linked to increased suspensions, teen substance use, as well as poor health as adults.



 85% of students who drop out of high school were chronically absent. This can be predicted as early as third grade, based on their early elementary school attendance.

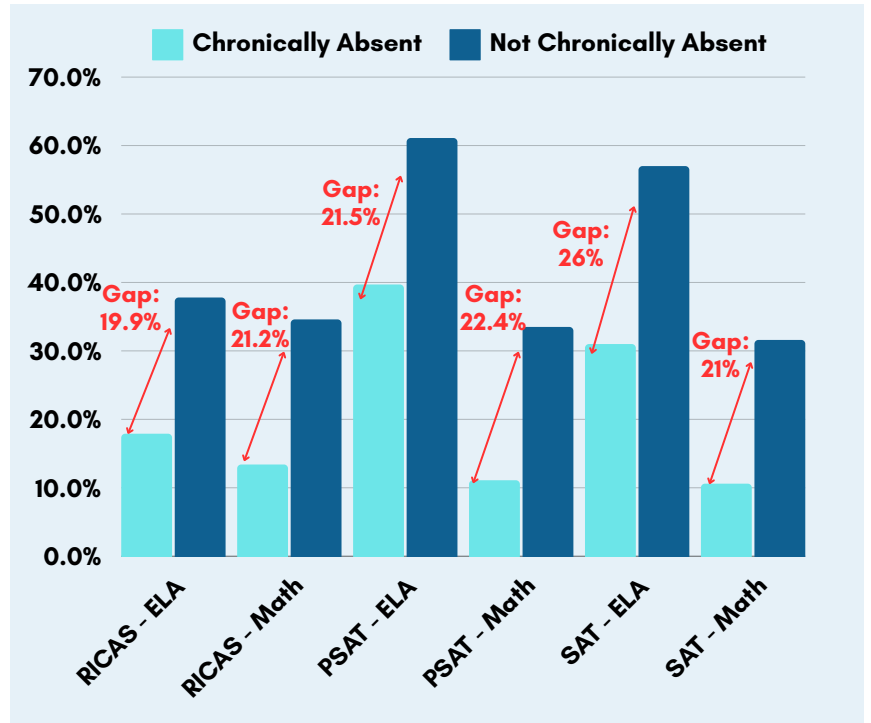
Learning impact

Significant performance gaps exist for students who are chronically absent. Chronically absent students, on average, performed lower than their not chronically absent peers by 19.9%–26% on 2023 assessments.

How is RIDE addressing this?

- Supporting local education agencies (LEAs) to address student absenteeism through **RIDE's Attendance Nudge tool**, which allows principals to communicate with families when student absences become a concern
- Publishing interactive data tools including **a real-time attendance leaderboard and a community dashboard** detailing chronic absenteeism data and trends
- Establishing **partnerships with municipal leaders, LEAs, and community organizations** that prioritize addressing student chronic absenteeism

2023 Percent Proficient: Chronically Absent Students vs. Not Chronically Absent Students



Did you know...?

During the 2023–2024 school year, elementary school students saw the greatest improvement by grade span, decreasing chronic absenteeism by 5.1 percentage points. **Regular school attendance in the early grades is essential for children to become proficient readers by the end of third grade**, which is a key predictor of academic and career success. Absences can also affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Join the effort!

Reducing chronic absenteeism is an all-hands-on-deck effort. We need you!

Scan the QR code to explore new and improved data tools, share attendance incentives, and find out how you can help your community reduce chronic absenteeism.

