



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Truancy Data and Outcomes 2025

Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.225.151

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2025 Legislative Update provides a comprehensive analysis of student unexcused absences and truancy-related actions reported by Washington State school districts to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for the 2024–25 school year. Drawing on data from the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), the report highlights key trends, policy impacts, and equity considerations related to student attendance and truancy.

In the 2024–25 school year, 110,287 students—representing 9.6% of the K-12 population—met the legal definition of truancy. This remains consistent with the 2023–24 school year, reflecting that there are continued challenges in student attendance since the COVID-19 pandemic. Although unexcused absences have stabilized, they remain elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels. Washington’s chronic absenteeism rates are comparable to other states across the nation.

Although there are a high number of students that meet the legal definition of truancy, only 5.2% had a truancy petition filed with the juvenile court. There is a significant decline from pre-pandemic filing rates, which were previously between 11–12%. The data suggests that there is a systemic shift in Washington in the direction of supportive, school-based interventions. Districts are implementing Tiered Attendance Interventions that align with Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) framework, Community Engagement Boards, and addressing the root causes of absenteeism.

The equity analysis provides details regarding disproportionality in truancy rates and petition filings among certain student groups. Students who are American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, low-income, experiencing homelessness, or in foster care are disproportionately represented among students who are meeting the legal definition of truancy and those with petitions filed.

To address these disparities and to address attendance outcomes, OSPI continues to support districts through guidance, training, and resources. The Reenvisioning Truancy Workgroup have provided insights into attendance barriers and informed recommendations for attendance systems. The Regional Attendance Improvement Networks supported improved attendance focusing on Tier 1 attendance teaming to incorporate improvement science with attendance teaming, data, messaging, and a proactive, prevention-focused approach to attendance.

INTRODUCTION

This 2025 report provides an updated analysis of student unexcused absences and truancy-related actions reported by school districts to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) for the 2024–25 school year. Building on prior legislative reports, it incorporates evidence-based practices and highlights emerging trends that influence student attendance and engagement.

The report emphasizes tiered attendance interventions, cross-sector collaboration, and trauma-informed strategies designed to reduce barriers to school attendance and support students and families. As required by [RCW 28A.225.151](#), this report addresses the truancy portion of the Becca Bill and excludes other status offense petitions such as At-Risk Youth (ARY) and Child in Need of Services (CHINS).

BACKGROUND

Thirty years ago, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Becca Bill in response to the tragic death of Rebecca (Becca) Hedman, a 12-year-old whose chronic truancy and running away from home contributed to her murder. The legislation was designed to unite schools, courts, communities, and families in addressing the barriers that prevent students from attending school.

While the original intent centered on youth safety and court involvement, Washington's approach reflects a broader understanding of absenteeism as a public health and equity issue. Over the last several years, policy changes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have reshaped how schools respond to student absences. Schools are a core institution in our society. Today, absences are a research-based early warning indicator or screener for students who may need additional support and intervention. Schools are increasingly positioned to provide wraparound services that promote engagement, wellbeing, and academic success.

OSPI Attendance Guiding Principles

OSPI has developed the following guiding principles which guide its work on Attendance:

- Attendance and engagement are foundational to student learning.
- Absences tell us when a student has not accessed or had the opportunity to engage in instruction, and therefore all absences matter.
- Absences are a critical early warning indicator that:
 - can reflect inequities that are caused by or perpetuated by our systems or when a student and family might need more support.
- We have an opportunity to get curious about why students aren't attending.
- Students and families are our best partners to understand the barriers to attendance.
- The purpose of attendance and truancy interventions are to reduce barriers to attendance and support students to engage; not to punish.
- Schools and districts have lots of opportunities for prevention and intervention before involving the Court.

Interventions Required Before and After Truancy Petition

Since the passage of the Becca Bill, Washington's truancy laws have evolved. Legislative reforms in 2016 and 2021 shifted the state's response from punitive enforcement to supportive, student-centered interventions. The elimination of the valid court order (VCO) through policy change ([SB 5290](#)) in 2021 marked a critical turning point, ending the practice of detaining youth for status offenses such as truancy. These changes are a broader shift surrounding the state's laws and approach toward truancy as more restorative and trauma-informed practices that prioritize engagement over punishment.

Schools are required to send a letter to parents¹ at the beginning of the school year, highlighting the importance of attendance, the impacts of not attending (including excused and unexcused), the support available to parents to assist with attendance concerns, and the role and responsibility of the school².

- Elementary schools are to hold a parent conference for students who have accumulated five or more excused absences³.
- Schools are to hold a parent conference for students after their third unexcused absence.
- Schools are to take data-informed steps between the second and seventh unexcused absences. This includes administering a screener, such as the Washington Assessment of Risks and Needs (WARNS)⁴, and providing best practice interventions to support better attendance. If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, reconvening of the IEP or 504 team is required⁵.
- A truancy petition shall be filed after seven unexcused absences in a month or after fifteen unexcused absences in a school year.
- After a school district files a petition with the juvenile court, the petition must be stayed (placed on hold while the district and court continue interventions), and the student shall be referred to a Community Engagement Board (CEB). The intent of the CEB is to understand the root causes of the absences and leverage community resources and relationships to provide wrap-around support to the student and family, helping them to address barriers and increase their engagement and attendance.

OSPI provides summaries of the legally required attendance & truancy steps:

- [Elementary](#)
- [Secondary](#)

All OSPI attendance Guidance can be found here: [Attendance Policies, Guidance, and Data Reporting](#)

OSPI has compiled these steps into these reference documents for [Elementary](#) and [Secondary](#) Schools. Additional guidance that addresses specific scenarios or related questions to these requirements can be found in [OSPI's Attendance & Truancy FAQ](#).

¹ [RCW 28A.225.010\(2\)](#) defines "parent" as: a parent, guardian, or person having legal custody of a child

² [RCW 28A.225.005](#)

³ [RCW 28A.225.018](#)

⁴ [RCW 28A.225.020 \(1\)\(c\)\(ii\)](#)

⁵ [RCW 28A.225.020 \(1\)\(c\)\(ii\)](#)

STUDENT-LEVEL DATA COLLECTION

OSPI began collecting student-level absence data through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) for both excused and unexcused absences in the 2012–2013 school year. Prior to that, districts reported a total number at the end of the year. Districts now report when a student is absent for a full day (50% or more of the school day) or a partial day (anything less than 50% of the school day), and whether it was excused or unexcused. In the 2018–19 school year, OSPI began collecting additional student-level data on truancy actions, as outlined in [RCW 28A.225.151](#).

Definitions Impacting Data Collection

The Washington state compulsory attendance statute ([RCW 28A.225](#)), OSPI administrative rule ([Chapter 392-401 WAC](#)) and [OSPI CEDARS Manual and Guidance](#) all contribute to shaping the absence data reported to OSPI.

Definition of Absence

The definition of absence can be found in [Chapter 392-401 WAC](#).

Definition of absence from in-person instruction.

A student is absent from in-person instruction when the student is:

- (1) Not physically present on school grounds; and
- (2) Not participating in the following activities at an approved location:
 - (a) Instruction; or
 - (b) Any instruction-related activity; or
 - (c) Any other district or school approved activity that is regulated by an instructional/academic accountability system, such as participation in district sponsored sports.

Definition of absence from synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

- (1) A student is absent from synchronous online instruction when the student does not log in to the synchronous meeting/class.
- (2) A student is absent from asynchronous instruction when there is no evidence that the student accessed the planned asynchronous activity.

Excused Absences

[WAC 392-401-020](#), revised in 2021, outlines the types of absences that must be excused. In addition, school districts may define additional reasons that absences may be excused in their local board policy.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are defined in Washington state statute as well as in district board policy. [RCW 28A.225.020\(2\)](#) defines an unexcused absence as when a child:

- Has failed to attend the majority of hours or periods in an average school day or has failed to comply with a more restrictive school district policy; and
- Has failed to meet the school district's policy for excused absences; or
- Has failed to comply with alternative learning experience program attendance requirements as described by the superintendent of public instruction.

School district policies will include greater detail and potentially have additional categories of what is considered excused, as well as policies and procedures that address excessive excused absences.

Truancy

In this report, truancy refers to a student who has accumulated seven or more unexcused absences in a month or fifteen or more unexcused absences in a year. This is the threshold that requires school districts to file a truancy petition. As these thresholds have shifted over the past several years, the table below lists the legal thresholds for being considered truant and having a petition filed by school year.

Table 1: Unexcused Absence Thresholds for Filing a Truancy Petition by Year

School Year	Thresholds for Filing a Truancy Petition
2018–19	5+ or 7+ or more unexcused absences in a month; 10 or more in a school year
2019–20	5+ or 7+ or more unexcused absences in a month; 10 or more in a school year
2020–21	Beginning of school year through April 26, 2021: 5+ or 7+ or more unexcused absences in a month; 10 or more in a school year April 26, 2021, through the end of SY 2021: 7 or more unexcused absences in a month; 15 or more in a school year
2021–Current	7 or more unexcused absences in a month; 15 or more in a school year

Full-Day Absence

A full-day absence, as defined in the [OSPI CEDARS Manual](#)—File N, is when a student misses 50% or more of the school day. The absence data in this report includes only full-day absences, as reported to CEDARS.

Truancy Actions as Reported to CEDARS

With the legislative changes to truancy passed in 2016, OSPI was required to begin collecting data from school districts in CEDARS when students were assigned or experienced key points in the truancy process. These are collectively referred to in this report as Truancy Actions. These are in addition to the previously collected filing of a truancy petition. Reporting guidance can be found in the [CEDARS Appendix F-Student Attributes & Program 2024–25](#). They are:

Truancy petition

When a student has reached the unexcused absence thresholds in [RCW 28A.225.030](#)—seven unexcused absences in a month or fifteen unexcused absences in a school year—the school district has attempted the [legally required interventions](#) and the absences have not improved, the district must file a truancy petition with the local juvenile court and the petition must be stayed.

Referral to a community engagement board

The statute specifically states “referral,” and this element collects the number of students that were **referred** to a CEB, regardless of if they attend or not.

Other coordinated means of intervention

As detailed in [RCW 28A.225.026](#), districts with fewer than 300 students must provide access to a CEB or through other coordinated means of intervention aimed at identifying barriers to school attendance, connecting students and their families with community services, etc.; and may do this cooperatively with other school districts and their educational service districts.

A hearing in juvenile court

This element identifies if a student received a hearing in juvenile court.

Other less restrictive disposition

This is reported when assigned as an alternative to the student being placed in juvenile detention when the student is found to be in contempt of a court order (e.g., change of placement, home school, alternative learning experience, residential treatment, etc.).

Detention for failure to comply with a court order

Each instance of the imposition of detention for failure to comply with a court order under [RCW 28A.225.090](#) is to be reported.

Referral to juvenile court

Identifies students with unexcused absences that have been referred to juvenile court before or without filing a truancy petition. This action is authorized under [SB 5290](#) (2021).

Data Caveats

Data quality

District submission of accurate and complete absence and truancy action data continues to have opportunity for improvement. We know through data analysis that not all districts submit truancy action data. OSPI's Attendance team continues to provide targeted communication and guidance to districts through training, reminders, and reinforcement of the importance of accurately reporting truancy filing to increase the data quality we receive.

What data are we missing?

Truancy is an early warning indicator of the likelihood of a student's success in school and in their community. OSPI continues to investigate who is missing from our education system and therefore missing out on their right to an education. The following data is critical to our understanding and identification of who is missing their educational opportunities, and why.

Students Withdrawn for Non-Attendance

One of the most critical pieces of data to complete the picture of "who is missing from our education system?" is information on students who are withdrawn from their school district.

Previously, it was common practice for school districts to involuntarily withdraw students for non-attendance without confirmation that students are enrolled in an approved educational program to comply with apportionment rules or CEDARS reporting. These rules dictate that school districts may not claim funding for students who have been absent for 20 consecutive days prior to count day. OSPI has clarified and provided the following guidance to districts:

"The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) does not require districts to withdraw students for either apportionment purposes or CEDARS reporting."

OSPI strongly encourages districts to follow the steps in the truancy intervention process before withdrawing a student from enrollment ([State Requirements that Impact Student Enrollment and Withdrawal Guidance](#).) Anecdotally, we hear that many districts have changed their practice in the last couple of years and are reducing the instances when they withdraw students for consecutive absences.

The data below will show which students accumulated unexcused absences while enrolled in school, however, it does not indicate how many and which students are no longer enrolled in the K–12 education system or are not engaged in any educational program.

Chronic Absence & Severe Chronic Absence

Over the last decade, research has shown that all absences, whether excused or unexcused (i.e., truancy), can significantly impact students' educational outcomes. The research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or just 2 days a month, can greatly impact students' chances of reading at grade level by third grade and significantly reduce the likelihood of graduating from high school. In Washington, chronic absence is tracked through its inverse metric on the [OSPI Report Card](#) as Regular Attendance—students attending 90% or more of school days. Regular attendance is typically released annually in January of the following school year along with other School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) measures—9th Grade on Track and Dual Credit Completion.

In the 2023–24 school year, 27% of Washington students were chronically absent, indicating a Tier 1 attendance challenge. This rate aligns with national trends, where chronic absenteeism nearly doubled following the COVID–19 pandemic and has only slightly declined since. Washington has joined 16 other states in a national commitment to reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% over five years⁶.

To better understand who is missing from our education system, it is essential to examine multiple attendance thresholds, including students who miss more than 20% of school days, regardless of whether those absences are excused or unexcused. Clear, consistent messaging to families about the importance of attendance, along with accessible and culturally responsive communication strategies, are critical components of a comprehensive Tier 1 response.

Contributing Factors or Reasons for Absences

OSPI does not collect any information about why students are absent. Absences are a critical early warning indicator, however, without further exploration, they provide limited insight into underlying causes. The following data must be interpreted with that lens in mind.

⁶ [Attendance Works; Join the Challenge! Cut Chronic Absence in Half](#)

UPDATE STATUS

In the 2024–25 school year, 110,287 Washington students met the legal definition of truancy—having 7 or more unexcused absences in a month or 15 or more in a school year—representing 9.6% of all students enrolled. This rate remains unchanged from the previous year and reflects ongoing challenges in student attendance following the COVID–19 pandemic. Given that chronic absence rates continue to exceed pre-pandemic levels, it is expected that truancy rates would remain elevated, as unexcused absences are included in chronic absenteeism.

Table 2 below presents statewide data from the past four school years. The data shows a steady increase in unexcused absences and students who meet the legal definition of truancy in [2021–22](#), [2022–23](#), [2023–24](#), with a slight stabilization in the 2024–25 school year. The percentage of students that met the thresholds for truancy are consistent with the 2023–24 school year.

Table 2: K–12 Statewide Truancy Totals

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Enrolled at Any Point During the School Year	1,144,079	1,145,539	1,148,636	1,145,454
Number of Unexcused Absences	4,736,405	4,826,461	5,429,810	5,411,777
Number of students with 7+ Unexcused Absences within 30 Days	85,564	82,359	88,061	87,315
Percentage of Students with 7+ Unexcused Absences within 30 Days	7.5%	7.2%	7.7%	7.6%
Number of Students with 15+ Unexcused Absences in a School Year	87,419	87,653	97,910	97,372
Percentage of Students with 15+ Unexcused Absences in a School Year	7.6%	7.7%	8.5%	8.5%
Total Number of Students Who Met Truancy Thresholds (7+ in a month or 15+ in the year)	101,469	99,951	110,494	110,287
Percentage of Students Who Met Truancy Thresholds (7+ in a month or 15+ in the year)	8.9%	8.7%	9.6%	9.6%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Table 3 below shows the number of students with a truancy petition and the percentage of students that met the legal definition of truancy who have a petition filed on them over several years. In 2024–

25, only 5.2% of students who met the legal definition of truancy had a petition filed, continuing a post-pandemic trend of reduced court filings. Prior to the pandemic, this percentage ranged between 11–12%, as noted in the [2019 Truancy Legislative Report](#).

Table 3: Trends in Truancy Petitions

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Number of Students with a Truancy Petition	4,054	5,792	5,997	5,748
Percentage of Students that Met Truancy Thresholds that had a Petition Filed	4.0%	5.7%	5.4%	5.2%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

What could explain these low rates of filing petitions?

The low percentages of truancy petitions filed suggest that school districts remain committed to addressing student absences without involving the court. Districts are focusing on Tier 1 interventions that promote consistent attendance and reestablish school routines that were disrupted by the pandemic. Some Tier 1 attendance strategies include attendance communication, campaigns, proactive nudge letters, and family engagement strategies. The low percentages could also indicate that schools lack systems or capacity to support the volume of students that meet these thresholds.

Districts may interpret state requirements for filing differently, especially in the absence of compliance or oversight. They may prioritize internal interventions or community engagement over the required legal steps in the truancy process. Districts and courts may be emphasizing that petitions are only filed after all interventions are exhausted, which can result in fewer petitions being filed.

Due to budget constraints, many schools have reduced or eliminated district truancy liaison positions that can lead to errors in reporting. Staff may not be aware of the legal reporting requirements when providing interventions for truancy. Staff turnover, the lack of capacity to support the number of students who need additional support, and intensive interventions remain barriers to filing petitions. Schools may also withdraw students with twenty consecutive absences prior to filing a petition, believing that they do not have the standing capacity, or directive to file a petition because the student is no longer enrolled. OSPI, Apportionment and CEDARS Administrators continue to offer guidance regarding [State Requirements that Impact Student Enrollment and Withdrawal guidance](#).

Students who qualify but do not have a petition filed may be accessing support from schools and other community programs; however, OSPI does not collect that data.

Table 4: Truancy Actions Once Truancy Petition is Filed by Court

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Number of Students with a Truancy Petition	4,054	5,792	5,997	5,748
Number of Students who were Referred to a Community Engagement Board	1,842	4,012	3,320	3,979
Number of Students who Received Coordinated Means of Intervention	810	1,949	2,741	3,300
Number of Students with a Hearing in Juvenile Court	447	766	768	866
Number of Students Ordered a Less Restrictive Disposition	86	96	201	433
Number of Students who were Detained for Failure to Comply with Court Order	1	3	13	22
Number of Students Referred to Juvenile Court (No Petition)	142	461	1452	543

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

The data presented in Table 4 above and Table 5 below show that 69.2% of students required to receive support from a Community Engagement Board were referred in the last year, showing an increase from the previous year of 14 percentage points. This demonstrates that school districts are increasing the implementation of Community Engagement Boards.

This analysis does not clarify if the students referred to a Community Engagement Board necessarily had a truancy petition filed. However, based on the law and statewide conversations with districts and courts, we are learning that some districts are providing Community Engagement Boards at different stages in the truancy process, with many/most districts incorporating them after a petition is filed.

There has been an increase in data from the year before for number of students referred to a Community Engagement Board, the number of students who received coordinated means of intervention, the number of students with a hearing in juvenile court, and the number of students ordered a less restrictive disposition.

Although the above data shows an increase in the number of students who were detained for failure to comply with a court order, which is explicitly against [the law](#). OSPI has since learned that two of the

three schools did not detain 17 of the 22 students in the juvenile justice system—data has been resubmitted to CEDARS for correction in this category. OSPI will continue to follow up with the other school to learn more if students were detained for actions related to truancy.

Table 5: Truancy Actions While Under a Truancy Petition by Percentage

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Percent of Students with a Truancy Petition that were Referred to a Community Engagement Board	45%	69%	55%	69%
Percent of Students with a Petition who Received Coordinated Means of Intervention	20%	36%	46%	57%
Percent of Students with a Truancy Petition who had a Hearing in Juvenile Court	11%	13%	13%	15%
Percent of Students Referred to a Community Engagement Board who had a Hearing in Juvenile Court	24%	19%	23%	22%
Percent of Students with a Truancy Petition who were Ordered a Less Restrictive Disposition	2%	2%	3%	8%
Percent of Students who had a Hearing in Juvenile Court who were Ordered a Less Restrictive Disposition	19%	13%	26%	50%
Percent of Students with a Truancy Petition who were Detained for Failure to Comply with Court Order	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Percent of Students who had a Hearing in Juvenile Court who were Detained for Failure to Comply with Court Order	<1%	<1%	1.7%	2.5%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

EQUITY ANALYSIS: DISAGGREGATION & DISPROPORTIONALITY

OSPI is committed to supporting the work that schools and districts do to make more equitable systems that serve all students. By identifying and examining disproportionality between student groups that experience truancy and the truancy process, this report can support that work.

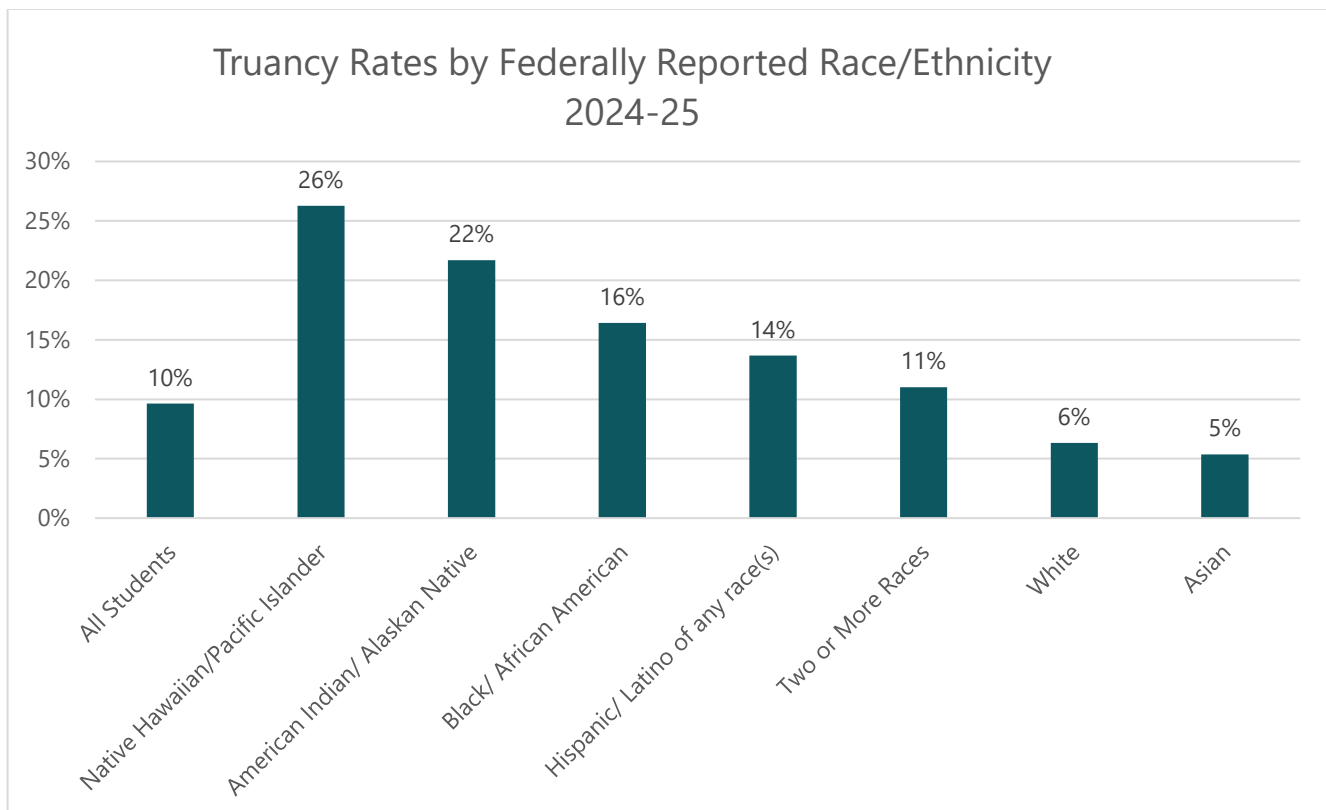
Drawing conclusions from gaps between students around attendance-related issues is complex, particularly at the state level. Gaps may be present in one jurisdiction that are offset in another. While certain gaps are apparent, interpreting the underlying causes and potential solutions is challenging.

The following analyses explore the equity implications of and disproportionality among student groups in key areas of truancy. We focus on these key areas:

- Which student groups had higher truancy rates?
- Which student groups are over-represented among youth who are truant?
- Which student groups have more petitions filed with the Juvenile Court?

Which Student Groups Had Higher Truancy Rates?

Chart 1: Truancy Rates by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity (2024–25)



Source: CEDARS extracted on 10/1/2025

Chart 1 above illustrates the truancy rates among students, categorized by federally reported race/ethnicity for the 2024–25 school year. The chart identifies that 10% of all students met the definition of truancy (7 or more unexcused absences in a month or 15 or more unexcused absences in a year) during the 2024–25 school year. The data includes that Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students have the highest truancy rate at 26% followed by American Indian/Alaskan Native at 22%, Black/African American at 16% and Hispanic Latino students at 14%.

Table 6: Truancy Rate Trends by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
All Students	9%	9%	10%	10%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	23%	24%	26%	26%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	24%	20%	21%	22%
Black/African American	15%	15%	17%	16%
Hispanic/Latino of Any Race(s)	13%	13%	14%	14%
Two or More Races	10%	10%	11%	11%
White	6%	6%	6%	6%
Asian	4%	4%	5%	5%

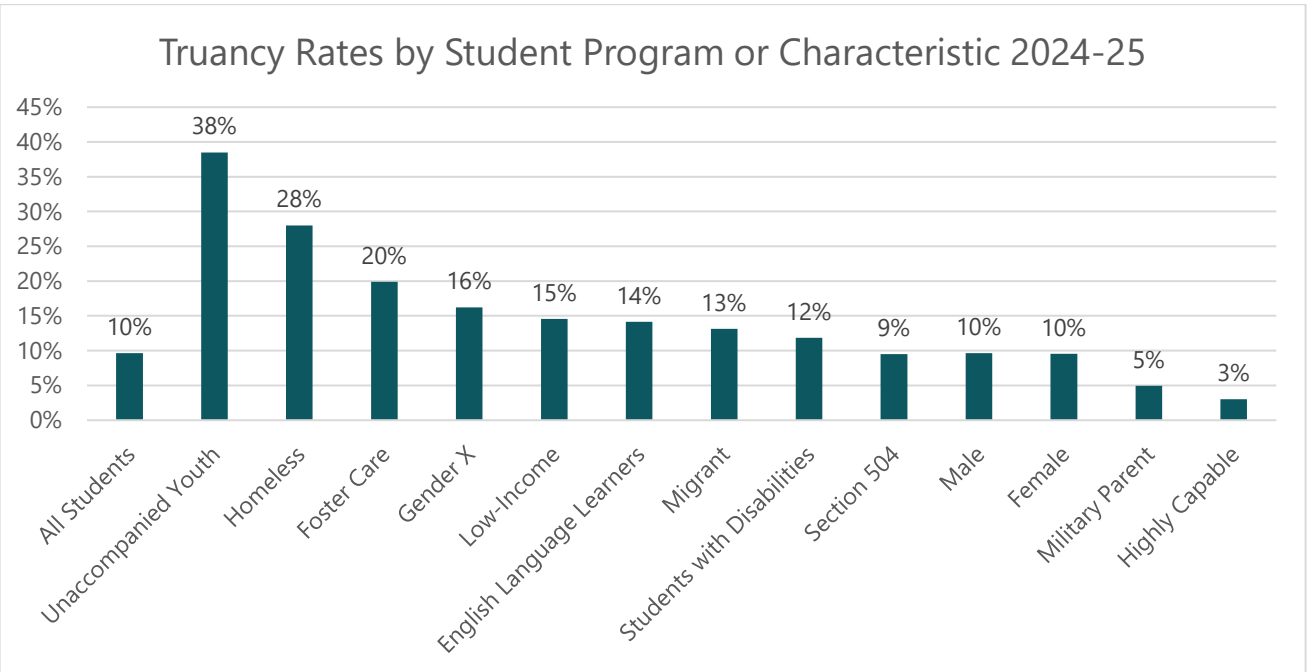
Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

The state average truancy rate remained at 10% for the 2024–25 school year for all student groups. American Indian/Alaskan Native students experienced a 1–percentage point increase (from 21% to 22%), while Black/African American students experienced a 1–percentage point decrease (from 17% to 16%). Notably the rate for all students, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students, Hispanic/Latino of Any Race(s) students, Two or More Races students, White students, and Asian students did not change.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Chronic absenteeism which encompasses truancy can be a key indicator of disparities that school districts may face in engaging, educating and supporting all students. Socio-economically disadvantaged students, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Unaccompanied Youth, students who are experiencing homelessness, are more likely to have their absences marked unexcused compared to their White, and Asian peers. This bias can lead to more punitive responses, such as denial of credit for missed work and exclusion from extracurricular activities, which do not effectively address the underlying causes of absenteeism. Punitive measures can exacerbate educational inequities and hinder efforts to support students and families in overcoming barriers to attendance.⁷

Chart 2: Truancy Rates by Student Program or Characteristic 2024–25



Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025

Many student groups continue to experience higher rates of truancy in the 2024–25 school year since the pandemic. The data indicates that the students in these programs are among our most vulnerable populations facing ongoing barriers to attendance. However, rates in chronic absenteeism by student program or characteristic do reflect an increase in regular attendance.

- Unaccompanied Youth: Truancy rates decreased 2 percentage point decrease from 40% in the 2023–24 school year to 38% in the 2024–25 school year.
- Students who are experiencing foster care: Truancy rates decreased by 1 percentage point decrease from 21% in the 2023–24 school year to 20% in the 2024–25 school year.

⁷ [Disparities in Unexcused Absences Across California Schools](#)

- Gender X students: Truancy rates decreased by 2 percentage point decrease from 18% in the 2023–24 school year to 16% in the 2024–25 school year.

Table 7: Truancy Rate Trends by Program and Characteristics

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
All Students	9%	9%	10%	10%
Unaccompanied Youth	38%	39%	40%	38%
Homeless	26%	26%	27%	28%
Foster Care	18%	18%	21%	20%
Gender X	13%	18%	18%	16%
Low Income	14%	13%	14%	15%
English Language Learners	13%	12%	14%	14%
Migrant	13%	13%	13%	13%
Students with Disabilities	11%	11%	12%	12%
Section 504	9%	9%	10%	9%
Male	9%	9%	10%	10%
Female	9%	9%	10%	10%
Military Parent	5%	5%	5%	5%
Highly Capable	3%	3%	3%	3%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

There has been a 1 percentage point increase from the previous year in truancy rates for the following student groups: students experiencing homelessness and low-income students.

Unaccompanied youth have experienced a 2 percentage point decrease in truancy rates, along with students who are experiencing foster care have 1 percentage point decrease, students who identify as Gender X have reduced 2 percentage point decrease, and students who have a section 504 have seen a reduction by 1 percentage point decrease in truancy rates.

Currently we see most programs and characteristic categories at the same percentage point as last year or a decrease by 1 percentage point to 2 percentage points.

Which Student Groups are Over-Represented Among Youth Who are Truant?

The following analyses identify which student groups are over-represented as truant given their proportion of the population, highlighting disproportionality. The table compares the proportion of students meeting the legal definition of truancy to their proportion of the student population.

For instance, in Table 8, which examines race/ethnicity, American Indian/Alaskan Native students make up 1.2% of the student population but account for 2.63% of all truant students. When a student group’s proportion of truants exceeds their proportion of the total population, it indicates disproportionality.

The magnitude of disproportionality is calculated by dividing the proportion of truant students by the proportion of the total student population. If the magnitude is greater than 1, the students are over-represented and hence more impacted or overly identified as meeting the legal definition of truancy. If the magnitude is less than 1, the student group is under-represented among students who meet the legal definition of truancy.

The data shows that Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders have the highest disproportionality, with their proportion of students being (2.7) times their proportion of the total population. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, Hispanic Latino and students of two or more races are also over-represented among students experiencing truancy. Conversely, White and Asian students are under-represented, with disproportionality magnitudes below 1.

Table 8: Magnitude of Disproportionality: Students that are Truant Compared to Proportion of Student Population by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity (2024–25)

	Proportion of Total Student Population	Proportion of Students that are Truant	Magnitude of Disproportionality
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.2%	2.6%	2.3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.6%	4.2%	2.7
Black/African American	5.0%	8.6%	1.7
Hispanic/Latino of Any Race(s)	26.6%	37.8%	1.4

	Proportion of Total Student Population	Proportion of Students that are Truant	Magnitude of Disproportionality
Two or More Races	9.3%	10.7%	1.1
White	47.2%	31.0%	.7
Asian	9.1%	5.1%	.6

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Table 9 shows the disproportionality in meeting the legal definition of truancy based on student program or characteristic. The highest magnitudes of disproportionality are observed among unaccompanied youth (4.0), youth experiencing homelessness (2.9), and students in foster care (2.1). Conversely, students identifying as male or female (1.0), Section 504 (1.0), those with a parent in the military (.5), and students in highly capable programs (.3) show no disproportionality or are under-represented among those meeting the legal definition of truancy.

A key finding is that students who are from low-income households, who make up just under 50% of the total student population, account for 75.5% of the students meeting the legal definition of truancy, affecting approximately 83,000 students. This trend has persisted over several years, as noted in the 2019, 2022, and 2024 Legislative reports.

Table 9: Magnitude of Disproportionality: Students that are Truant Compared to Proportion of Student Population by Student Program/Characteristic (2024–25)

	Proportion of Total Student Population	Proportion of Students that are Truant	Magnitude of Disproportionality
Unaccompanied Youth	0.6%	2.6%	4.0
Homeless	4.2%	12.3%	2.9
Foster Care	0.4%	0.8%	2.1
Gender X	0.4%	0.7%	1.7
Low-Income	49.9%	75.5%	1.5
Migrant	2.0%	2.7%	1.4
English Language Learners	15.2%	22.4%	1.5

	Proportion of Total Student Population	Proportion of Students that are Truant	Magnitude of Disproportionality
Students with Disabilities	16.8%	20.7%	1.2
Section 504	5.2%	5.1%	1.0
Female	47.9%	47.6%	1.0
Male	51.6%	51.7%	1.0
Military Parent	2.8%	1.5%	.5
Highly Capable	7.7%	2.4%	.3

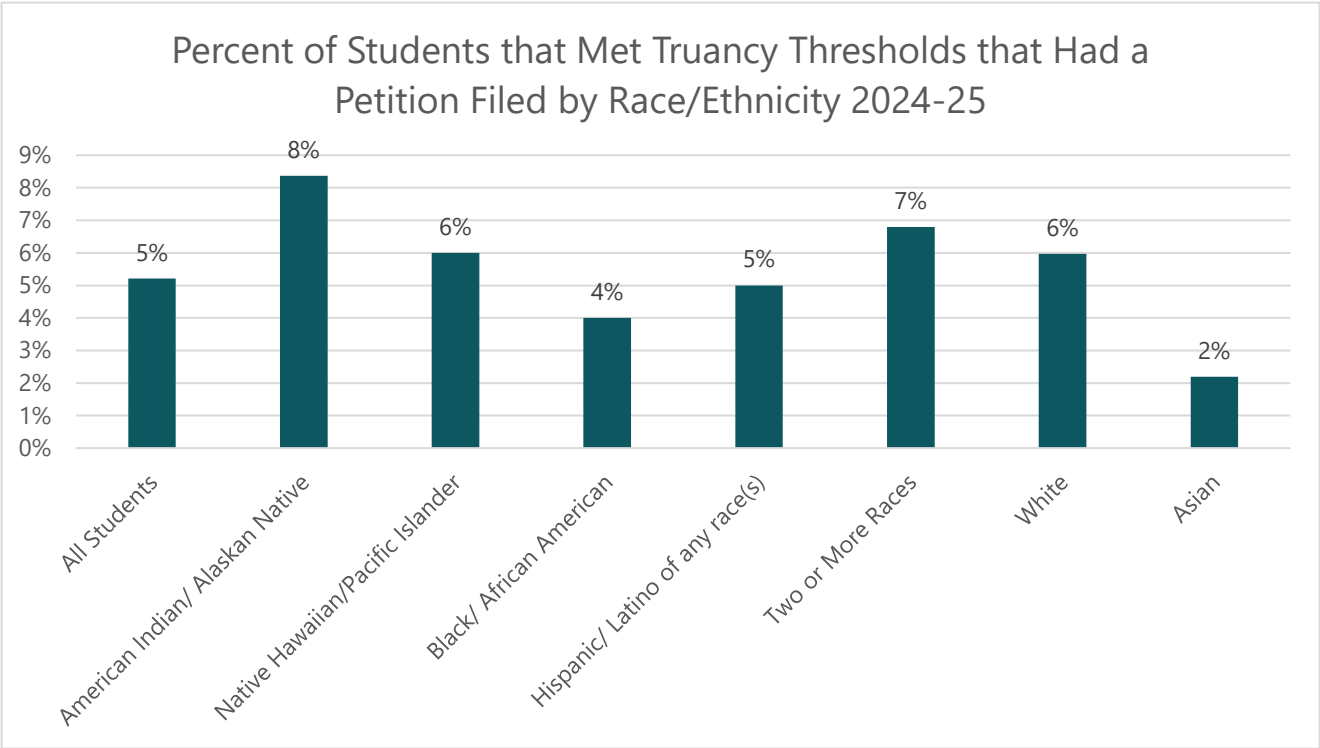
Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Which Student Groups Have More Petitions Filed with the Juvenile Court?

The analysis below digs deeper into the group of students who had a petition filed (5.2% of all students met the legal definition of truancy, or 5,748 students).

Chart 3 below displays the proportion of students that met the legal definition of truancy who also had a petition filed by race/ethnicity category. The chart shows that 5.2% of all students who met the legal definition of truancy had a petition filed. American Indian/Alaskan Native students had the highest rate of petitions filed at 8.4%, while Asian students had the lowest truancy petitions filed at 2%.

Chart 3: Percent of Students that Met Truancy Thresholds that Had a Petition Filed by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity 2024–25



Source: CEDARS Extracted on 10/1/2025

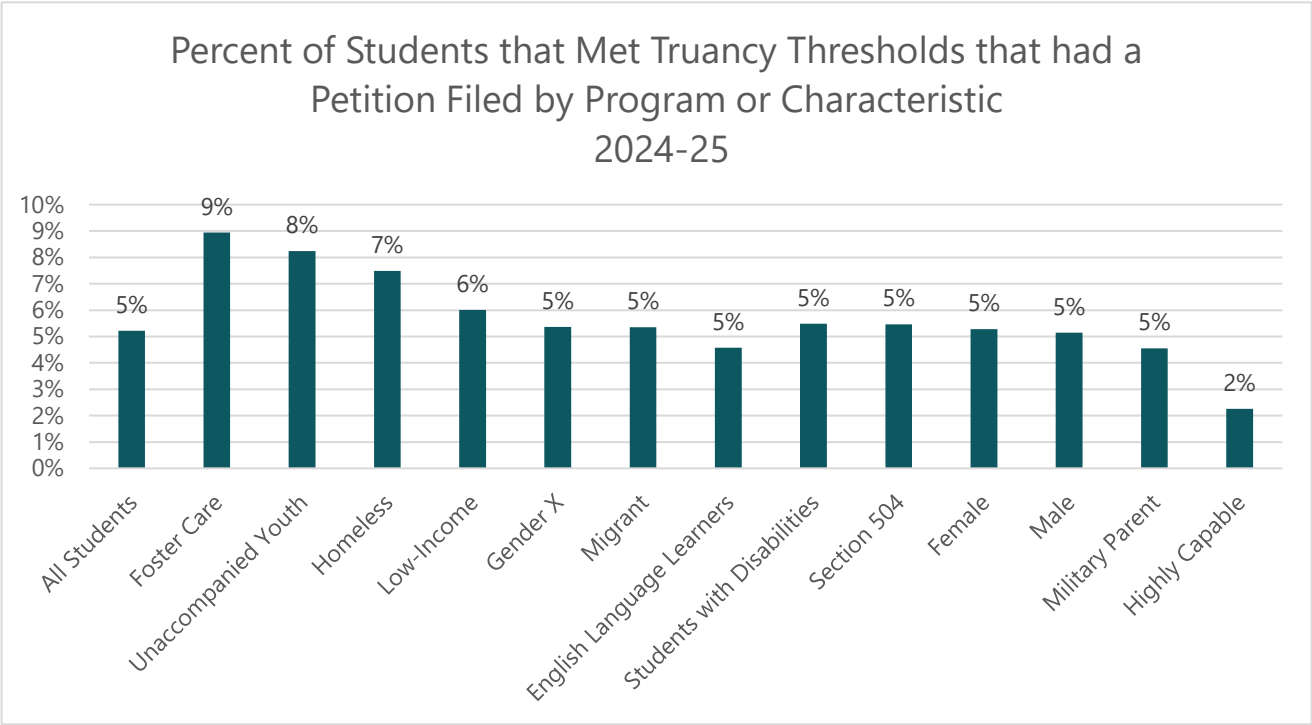
Table 10: Trends in Percentage of Students that Met Truancy Thresholds that had a Petition Filed by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
All Students	4%	6%	5%	5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5%	9%	10%	8%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	5%	7%	5%	6%
Black/African American	4%	4%	4%	4%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	4%	5%	5%	5%
Two or More Races	4%	7%	6%	7%
White	2%	6%	6%	6%
Asian	2%	3%	2%	2%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Chart 4 below shows data for students served by special programs or by characteristics. The data shows that youth that are in foster care and unaccompanied youth have the highest rates of petitions filed—9% and 8% respectively—compared to other programs or characteristics, such as students with a military parent, students that are migratory, or students in Highly Capable programs.

Chart 4. Percent of Students that Met Truancy Thresholds That had a Petition Filed by Program or Characteristic 2024–25



Source: CEDARS extracted on 10/1/2025

Table 11 below illustrates the trends in petition filing rates among students meeting the legal definition of truancy, categorized by program or characteristic. Most student groups either maintained their rates and multiple showed a decline (Unaccompanied Youth 2 percentage points, Homes 1 percentage point, Gender X 1 percentage point, Students with Disabilities 1 percentage point, Section 504 1 percentage point, female students 1 percentage point, and Highly Capable 1 percentage point). Both students who are migratory and students who have a parent who is in the military experienced a 1 percentage point increase from the previous year.

Table 11: Trends in Percentage of Students that Met Truancy Thresholds that had a Petition Filed by Program or Characteristic

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
All Students	4%	6%	5%	5%
Foster Care	6%	11%	9%	9%
Unaccompanied Youth	5%	14%	9%	8%
Homeless	5%	8%	8%	7%
Low-Income	5%	7%	6%	6%
Gender X	5%	14%	6%	5%
Migrant	2%	4%	4%	5%
English Language Learners	3%	6%	5%	5%
Students with Disabilities	5%	6%	6%	5%
Section 504	4%	6%	6%	5%
Female	4%	6%	6%	5%
Male	4%	6%	5%	5%
Military Parent	2%	4%	4%	5%
Highly Capable	1%	2%	3%	2%

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Which Student Groups are Disproportionately Filed On?

The following analyses address which student groups disproportionately have truancy petitions filed with the juvenile court. This is determined by comparing the proportion of students meeting the legal definition of truancy to the proportion of petitions filed.

Table 12: Magnitude of Disproportionality: Proportion of All Students that Met Truancy Thresholds Compared to Proportion of Petitions Filed by Federally Reported Race/Ethnicity

	Proportion of All Students That Met Truancy Thresholds	Proportion of Students That had a Petition Filed	Magnitude of Disproportionality
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	4.3%	4.6%	1.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.6%	4.2%	1.6
Black/African American	8.6%	6.6%	0.8
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	37.8%	33.0%	0.9
Two or More Races	10.7%	13.9%	1.3
White	6%	31.0%	1.1
Asian	5.1%	2.1%	0.4

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025.

Table 12 shows that American Indian/Alaskan Native students have the highest disproportionality at 1.6, meaning their proportion of petitions filed is 1.6 times higher than their proportion of students meeting the legal definition of truancy. Students that are White have a disproportionality of 1.1 with students who are Two or More Races at 1.3; whereas students who are Asian experience the lowest disproportionality at 0.4.

Table 13: Magnitude of Disproportionality: Proportion of All Students That Met Truancy Thresholds Compared to Proportion of Petitions Filed by Program or Characteristic

	Proportion of All Students That Met Truancy Thresholds	Proportion of All Students That had a Petition Filed	Disproportionality
Unaccompanied Youth	2.6%	4.1%	1.6
Homeless	12.3%	17.7%	1.4
Foster Care	0.8%	1.3%	1.7
Gender X	0.7%	0.7%	1.0
Low-Income	75.5%	87.0%	1.2
English Language Learners	2.7%	2.8%	1.0
Migrant	22.4%	19.6%	0.9
Students with Disabilities	20.7%	21.8%	1.1
Section 504	5.1%	5.4%	1.0
Female	47.6%	48.3%	1.0
Male	51.7%	51.0%	1.0
Military Parent	1.5%	1.3%	0.9
Highly Capable	2.4%	1.0%	0.4

Source: CEDARS, extracted on 10/1/2025

Table 13 above shows that the student groups with the highest disproportionality are students reported as youth in foster care (1.7), students reported as unaccompanied youth (1.6), youth who are experiencing homelessness (1.4), youth who are identified as low income (1.2), and students with disabilities (1.1). Students that are migrants, that have a parent in the military, and students that are in a Highly Capable Program are under-represented in the population of students that had a truancy petition filed.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Washington students are continuing to experience higher absences than prior to the pandemic, including both truancy rates and chronic absence rates. Nationally, chronic absence is a key priority to addressing academic outcomes that have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

What Conclusions Can We Draw from the Data?

Schools are implementing interventions and prevention efforts for absent students, addressing chronic absenteeism by seeking ways to support students with excused and unexcused absences. [OSPI's guidance](#) has focused on Tier 1 efforts, attendance messaging, and fostering a culture of attendance and belonging. School districts are forming attendance teams to review data and implement Tier 1 interventions, resulting in improved attendance.

OSPI has identified that when there is a concerted effort to foster a culture of attendance and a robust Tier 1 attendance system is in place, the number of students who need Tier 2 and Tier 3 support are fewer. Courts and schools report that when a student does need Tier 3 support, the level of intervention that is needed is more intense and time-consuming. Families are experiencing financial hardship, mental health, and other barriers that necessitate a wraparound team approach.

A strong Tier 1 attendance system supports all students by increasing attendance and identifying those who need one-to-one support. It also prevents the system from being overloaded with students who need clear communication about the importance of attendance for social needs, motivation to engage in school activities, and an understanding of the connection between attendance and student wellbeing.

OSPI continues to recommend a proactive preventative response to student absences at Tier 1, such as:

- Attendance awareness campaigns
- Proactive, supportive, translated communication about absences
- Access to visual data that includes the early warning indicators of attendance, behavior, and academics
- Team approach to data and interventions
- Community partnerships
- Tiered interventions/best practices

OSPI's Attendance & Truancy Program also learned that there is a need for statewide resources to support staff who are transitioning or accepting roles that have a district truancy liaison lens. Schools and districts also request guidance and support for Community Engagement Boards. OSPI provided eight Community Engagement Board Modules with guidance, videos, and templates at the end of

June for schools and districts to access that can be located on OSPI's [Truancy Supports and Resources](#) webpage.

Learning from Current Projects to Inform System Opportunities & Gaps

OSPI's Attendance Program provided oversight of the Re-Envisioning Truancy Policy and Practices Project and Regional Attendance Improvement Networks (which evolved from learnings of the [ESSER Attendance & Re-engagement Project](#)). These opportunities provided insight from grantees, partners, communities, and youth and families with lived experience.

Re-Envisioning Truancy Project

During the 2022–23 school year and 2023–24 school year, OSPI convened the [Re-Envisioning Truancy Policies and Practices Project](#) to better understand the impact of Washington's truancy laws and practices on students, families, and educators. In partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), and a volunteer workgroup, OSPI coordinated statewide listening sessions and interviews with youth and families directly involved in the truancy process. The project also engaged education system partners connected to attendance and truancy to gather insights on implementation challenges and opportunities.

The workgroup has developed recommendations to inform OSPI and the [Graduation: A Team Effort \(GATE\) Advisory](#) and are included in the [2025 OSPI Building Bridges Legislative Report](#). The workgroup prioritized incorporating all members voices to identify systemic barriers and support the development of more equitable and effective attendance interventions across Washington.

Regional Attendance Improvement Networks

During the 2024–25 school year, OSPI and three ESDs (101, 113, and 123) partnered to implement the [Regional Attendance Improvement Networks](#). These networks supported 25 schools to build stronger systems to reduce chronic absenteeism through coaching, collaboration, data-informed strategies and teaming around attendance. The networks built on the National Institute for Health Improvement's Science Model to guide implementation, focusing on continuous improvement through the Plan–Do–Study Act (PDSA) cycle and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) framework. The networks resulted in positive attendance outcomes and sustainable systems.

Health Infographic-When is Your Child Too Sick for School?

A key take away from the [ESSER Attendance & Re-engagement Project](#) is that a commonly stated reason that students miss school is due to health-related absences. Communication from schools and districts is that after the COVID–19 pandemic parents are unsure of when their child should stay home for health-related symptoms. OSPI in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Health

adapted a health infographic that was created by Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department at the beginning of the 2025–26 school year. The infographic provides school districts with statewide consistent communication to share with families on when to keep their children home from school. The health infographic “[When is your child too sick for school?](#)” has been translated into the following languages: [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Dari](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#), [Ukrainian](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Reducing Chronic Absenteeism by 50%: A National Challenge

Washington State Superintendent Chris Reykdal signed on to the [Attendance Works National Chronic Absence Challenge](#) to reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% in 5 years with 16 other states. OSPI will be asking districts to join OSPI in the commitment to reducing chronic absenteeism. Districts will have the opportunity to join a statewide district attendance network virtually where they will have access to resources to improve attendance, an opportunity to participate in peer learning networks, and be highlighted on the OSPI Attendance website.

Contact

To learn more, contact Vicki Wood, Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor at vicki.wood@k12.wa.us.

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