

There But Not Present: Rethinking Student Engagement



October 13, 2026

Agenda

- 01 Welcome & Introductions
- 02 Quick look at absence trends
- 03 What early warning systems catch, and where they stop
- 04 What the clinic log reveals
- 05 From symptom to signal
- 06 The post-COVID culture shift
- 07 Next steps for district leaders
- 08 Q&A + Takeaways



Today's Presenters



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Attendance is Recovering. Engagement is Harder to See.

Share of students chronically absent (missing 10%+ of school days), 31 states.

2017-2018

15%

Pre-pandemic baseline

2021-2022

29%

Pandemic peak

2024-2025

21%

Latest data

Attendance shows who's missing. It doesn't show who's checked out.

Source: [Attendance Works and Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University \(June 2026\)](#)





STATE

Lawmakers seek to tackle statewide chronic absenteeism

Their proposals include a dashboard that tracks absenteeism data in real time.

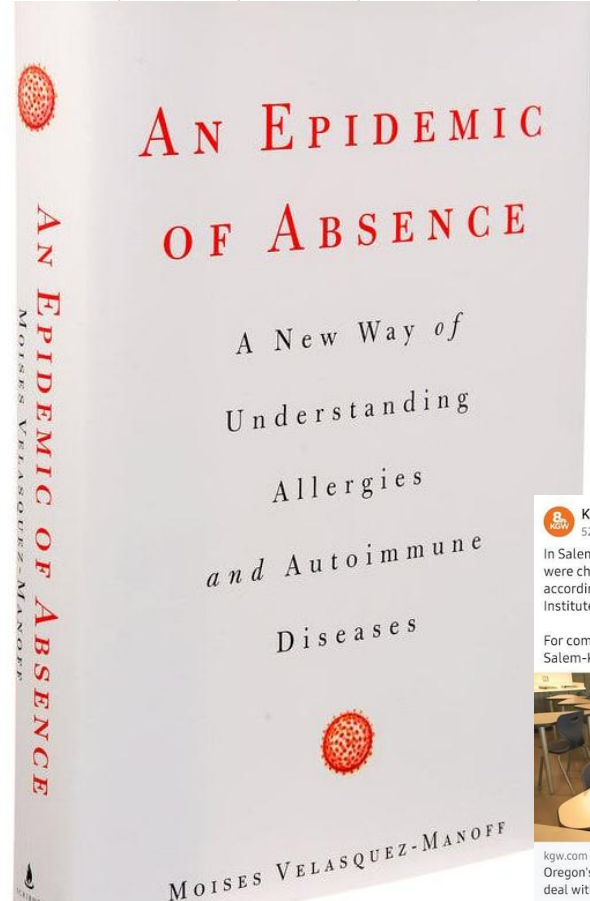
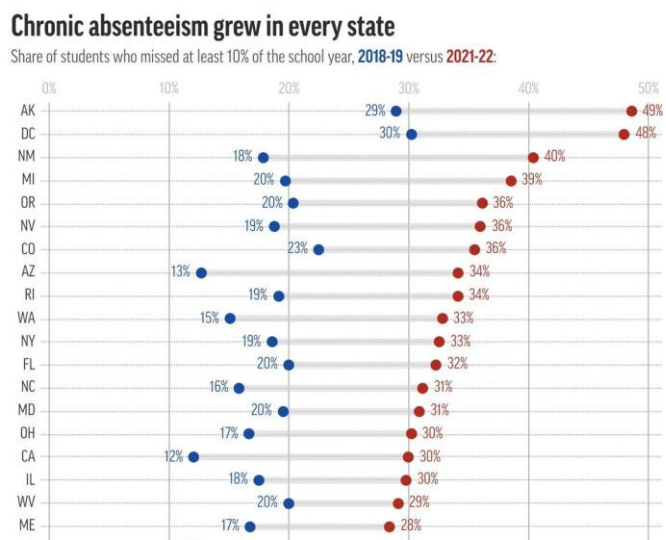
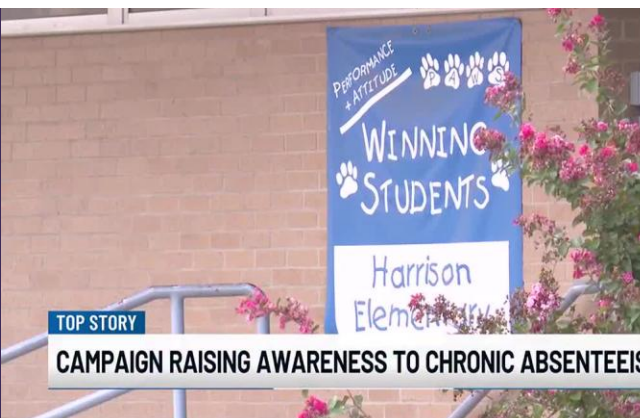
BY: MADINA TOURE | 02/09/2026 11:33 AM EST

POLITICO NEW YORK

NEWS SPOTLIGHT OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Schools Have a Chronic Absenteeism Problem. Now, It Will No Longer Count Against Them

Some educators say they can't control whether kids come to school, but districts say they'll keep working to lower the rates.



RETHINKING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

WHY SCHOOLS CAN'T SOLVE IT ALONE

Sarah Winchell Lenhoff and Jeremy Singer



FIGHTING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

VERMONT CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

- 18% during 2019-2020
- 42% during 2021-2022
- 24% during 2023-2024

VERMONT IS ROLLING PLANS TO COMBAT CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM THAT HAS PLAGUED THE STATE SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

WCAX3 NEWS 3

MISSISSIPPI CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Current rate is 27.6%
- Represents 120,408 students
- During 2023-2024 school year rate was 24.4%

WLOX NEWS NOW 8:30 1:30 6:30

METRO EXCLUSIVE

300K NYC public school students — nearly 35% — 'chronically absent' as grades plummet, spending surges

By Carl Campanile

Published March 6, 2025, 7:00 a.m. ET

Make New York Post a Preferred Source

272 Comments

Poll

Is your school nurse part of conversations about student engagement?

A

Yes, regularly

C

Rarely or never

B

Sometimes

D

Not sure



Questions?

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Thank You