**Attendance Works in the News**

*(Selected Excerpts)*

# [**Missing: Millions of Students, Politico, October 26,2020**](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-education-coronavirus-special-edition/2020/10/26/missing-millions-of-students-791170)

# **But average daily attendance rates can “mask” high levels of chronic absence,** defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, said Hedy Chang, who directs Attendance Works, an initiative targeting chronic absenteeism. “I am seriously concerned that we have a much bigger absenteeism problem than we actually recognize."

# [**Five Things You Need to Know About Student Absences During Covid-19**](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/District_Dossier/2020/10/absenteeism_covid_19_this_fall.html)**, Education Week, October 16, 2020**

# The nonprofit Attendance Works recommends [using attendance data](https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/key-concepts-for-leveraging-chronic-absence-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/) to "partner with families to develop plans reflecting a student's situation," including health, academics, and relationships.

[**Coronavirus: Fact vs Fiction. Taking Attendance in a Virtual School Year, CNN,**](https://edition.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/corona-virus?episodeguid=cd79babb-2d70-4200-9e60-ac4d01481569) October 8, 2020 (This is a podcast)

# [**Missing students: Educators knock on doors to find them**](https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2020/1001/Missing-students-Educators-knock-on-doors-to-find-them)**, Christian Science Monitor, October 1, 2020**

When schools closed abruptly this spring, few opted to take regular or daily attendance, according to Hedy Chang, executive director of the nonprofit [Attendance Works](https://www.attendanceworks.org/). “It wasn’t seen as the highest-priority concern,” she says.

Ms. Chang says that’s starting to change as schools reopen. But she cautions that districts ought to use attendance not for purposes of “high-stakes accountability,” school funding, or to punish parents whose kids don’t participate, but to learn which kids need support and which interventions are helping kids stay engaged.

[**School Attendance In The COVID Era: What Counts As ‘Present’?**](https://www.wbez.org/stories/school-attendance-in-the-covid-era-what-counts-as-present/370ab934-d21d-4386-b2ff-a1deb1225091) **National Public Radio, September 24, 2020**

“Chang would like to see family communication be a big part of a “positive, problem-solving approach.” Getting devices and Internet connections into homes is a basic need that hasn’t yet been met, it’s estimated, for millions of students.

Beyond that, schools need to focus on updating contact information for all students, she says. And schools should take advantage of the large amounts of data provided by learning management software systems: “Notice each time kids show up and notice when they don’t show up and look for patterns on whether there could be particular types of learning opportunities that they miss.”

[**As Schools Go Remote, Finding ‘Lost’ Students Gets Harder**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/us/schools-covid-attendance.html?smid=tw-share) **New York Times, September 22, 2020**

Keeping track of who shows up during the first few weeks of virtual school will be particularly important, said Ms. Chang of Attendance Works.

“We are trying to recreate school in a way we’ve never done before,” she said. “What is our early feedback loop about how it’s working? I would argue whether a kid shows up is a key indication of that.”

# [**Focus on outreach, health and data can help schools limit COVID-19 impacts**](http://blog.csba.org/limiting-covid-impacts/)**,** [**Conditions of Children**](http://blog.csba.org/category/conditions-of-children/)**, California School Board Association, April 17, 2020**

“We know if they were chronically absent before, it reflects existing equity gaps that mean they’re particularly vulnerable,” Chang said. “And it will be the truth as we start to move into more virtual and remote learning opportunities, we’re going to have to start thinking about ‘what’s the equivalent of chronic absence’ so we can identify the growing number of students who are challenged economically as a result of this health crisis.”