

## ASK A REL RESPONSE

### Attendance

A frequent request to REL Northwest’s reference desk is for research on effective strategies to increase attendance. The following annotated bibliography is a compilation of publicly accessible resources found in a search of research databases and websites of federally funded organizations and other research and policy centers. We selected publications that provide current discussions and research about attendance, with specific attention to those that offer effective solutions to improve absenteeism, chronic absenteeism, and truancy. We also selected publications from organizations in the Northwest. All abstracts have been adapted from published material.

This customized search is provided through our Ask A REL service and is available free of charge. Ask A REL responses are tailored to meet the needs of each individual request and include links to full-text articles from peer-reviewed journals. If you would like additional research on attendance, truancy, or on other topics, please contact Jennifer Klump at [relnw@educationnorthwest.org](mailto:relnw@educationnorthwest.org) for personalized assistance.

Two organizations that have multiple resources on attendance are Attendance Works (<http://www.attendanceworks.org>) and the National Center for Student Engagement (<http://www.schoolengagement.org>)

**Attendance Works. (2015). *Bringing attendance home: Engaging parents in preventing chronic absence* [Toolkit]. Retrieved from <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-toolkit/>**

This toolkit contains research that shows a positive relationship between parent involvement and attendance as well as the results of new studies examining parents’ attitudes about school absences and their implications for messaging and action. It offers key principles to share with parents about the importance of good attendance and provides interactive exercises to use with groups of parents.

**Attendance Works. (2015). *Mapping the early attendance gap: Charting a course for school success*. Retrieved from <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/mapping-the-gap/>**

This brief maps the national attendance gap—the who, what, when, where, and why of absenteeism—using research drawn from national sources and attendance data gathered across states from students taking the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Student

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health consistently emerges as an important topic, both as a challenge and as a solution to improving attendance. The appendices list NAEP attendance data for every state, disaggregated by income, race and ethnicity, and disability status. This issue brief documents how states can use their data to help schools and communities identify when and why chronic absenteeism becomes a problem in the early grades so that they can implement effective intervention strategies.

**Black, A. T., Seder, R. C., & Kekahio, W. (2014). *Review of research on student nonenrollment and chronic absenteeism: A report for the Pacific Region* (REL 2015-054). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific website: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2014054.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014054.pdf)**

This research review identifies four broad themes related to chronic absenteeism: student-specific issues, family-specific issues, school-specific issues, and community-specific issues. Because many of these potential factors are interconnected, educators and community stakeholders might need to gather data specific to their communities and consider multiple factors to understand the reasons for nonenrollment and chronic absenteeism.

**Ginsberg, A., Jordan, P., Chang, H. (2014). *Absences add up: How school attendance influences student success*. Retrieved from Attendance Works website: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/absences-add/>**

This state-by-state analysis of NAEP data demonstrates that students who miss more school than their peers consistently score lower on standardized tests, a result that holds true at every age, in every demographic group, and in every state and city tested.

**Henderson, T., Hill, C., & Norton, K. (2014). *The connection between missing school and health: A review of chronic absenteeism and student health in Oregon*. Retrieved from Upstream Public Health website: <http://www.upstreampublichealth.org/resources/ChronicAbsenteeismReport>**

Recent data show that Oregon has one of the nation's worst chronic absenteeism problems: 24 percent of Oregon students in grades 4 and 8 reported missing three or more days of school in a month. Due to the many different reasons for absenteeism—and the unique needs of each school community—this literature review recommends a variety of strategies for preventing student absences. The authors examine the chronic absenteeism challenge, why it matters, different factors that affect it, its connection to health, and starting points for working collectively to address it.

**Jones, T., & Lovrich, N. (with Lovrich, N. R.). (2011). *Updated literature review on truancy: Key concepts, historical overview, and research relating to promising practices—with particular utility to Washington State*. Retrieved from Center for Children and Youth**

**Justice website:** <http://ccyj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WSU-Literature-Review.pdf>

This is an updated review of research on truancy behavior, defined here as a student's unlawful absence from school without parental knowledge or consent. The authors examine racial and ethnic minority demographic characteristics and population changes within this context. They also discuss barriers to educational attainment and achievement for racial and ethnic minority K–12 students and how these barriers affect educational, occupational, and income status. This brief also offers recommendations for improving the attendance and academic progress toward graduation of all K–12 students and specific recommendations for improving the educational outcomes of racial and ethnic minority students.

**Maynard, B. R., McCrea, K. T., Pigott, T. D., & Kelly, M. S. (2012).** *Indicated truancy interventions: Effects on school attendance among chronic truant students (Campbell Systematic Review No. 2012.10)*. Retrieved from ERIC website: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED535217>

This research review examines three questions: Do programs intended to increase student attendance have positive effects? Are there differences in the effects of school-based, clinic/community-based, and court-based programs? Are some modes of programs (i.e., family, group, multimodal) more effective than others in increasing student attendance?

Overall, the findings suggest that chronically truant students benefit from a variety of interventions targeting attendance behaviors. No single program type stands out as being more effective than any other. The studies included in the review improved attendance by an average of 4.69 days. Although the interventions included in this study were generally found to be effective, the rates of absenteeism in most studies remained above acceptable levels.

**National Forum on Education Statistics. (2009).** *Every school day counts: The Forum guide to collecting and using attendance data (NFES 2009-804)*. Retrieved from U.S. Department, National Center for Education Statistics website: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009804>

This guide offers best practices for collecting and using student attendance data to improve performance. It includes a standard set of codes to make attendance data comparable across districts and states and provides examples of how attendance information has been used effectively by school districts.

**Railsback, J. (2004).** *Increasing student attendance: Strategies from research to practice*. Retrieved from Education Northwest website: <http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/increasing-student-attendance.pdf>

This publication provides a review of factors that can impact student attendance, as well as examples of how these factors have been implemented in school districts in the Northwest. One example is the Linn Benton Lincoln County Educational Service District (Oregon), which provides an attendance review service <https://www.lblesd.k12.or.us/student-family-support-services/attendance-services/>