



BEST PRACTICES IN MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ACROSS ENVIRONMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
KEY FINDINGS	5
SECTION I: STATE GUIDANCE.....	6
Alabama	6
Colorado.....	8
Texas	11
Wyoming	12
SECTION II: DISTRICT GUIDANCE.....	18
Boston Public Schools.....	18
District of Columbia Public Schools	19
SECTION III: NATIONAL GUIDANCE	23
Attendance Works.....	23
Insight Policy Research	25

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and supporting student attendance and engagement presented key challenges to districts as schools closed in spring 2020 due to COVID-19. According to the Center on Reinventing Public Education's (CRPE's) review of 477 districts nationwide, fewer than half monitored attendance or engagement after closing. Specifically, 48.0 percent required attendance tracking or one-on-one check-ins. The latter proved more common, as 36.9 percent of reviewed districts required one-on-one check-ins, while only 27.4 percent required attendance tracking.¹ If districts do not have clear policies or guidelines specifying when and how to record and monitor attendance and engagement in the context of different instructional models, including hybrid and virtual learning, then data collection could become inconsistent or even nonexistent, further complicating schools' efforts to track student progress and performance.²

This report aims to inform states' and districts' reopening plans by providing recommendations for monitoring attendance in hybrid and virtual learning models, including guidance on tracking the nature of student absences (e.g., truancy, chronic absenteeism, COVID-19 and other excused absences). Hanover Research (Hanover) has reviewed select policies and practices at the state and district levels, as well as recommendations issued by key national organizations.

Thus, this report includes three sections:

- **Section I: State Guidance** presents state-level recommendations obtained primarily from reopening plans and recent resources from four state education agencies: Alabama State Department of Education, Colorado Department of Education, Texas Education Agency, and Wyoming Department of Education.
- **Section II: District Guidance** includes district-level practices communicated primarily in reopening plans and other COVID-19 -related documentation issued by two districts: Boston Public Schools and District of Columbia Public Schools.
- **Section III: National Guidance** provides recommendations from two key national organizations—Attendance Works and Insight Policy Research—and links to related resources that districts may use to support student attendance during online and hybrid learning.

Figure ES 1 summarizes the extent to which profiled organizations provide information relevant to monitoring student engagement and attendance. Note that, even when a profiled organization mentions a particular area, the guidance offered may be limited.

Figure ES 1: Summary of Available Information by Profiled Organization

	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE		
	ONLINE	HYBRID	TRUANCY	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM	EXCUSED ABSENCES
State Guidance					
Alabama State Department of Education	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Colorado Department of Education	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

¹ Gross, B. and A. Opalka. "Too Many Schools Leave Learning to Chance During the Pandemic." Center on Reinventing Public Education, June 2020. pp. 1–4. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED605576.pdf>

² Johnson, C. et al. "Tracking Student Attendance Under Remote Learning Is a Complicated Mess - Education Week." Education Week, July 13, 2020. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/07/14/tracking-student-attendance-under-remote-learning-is.html>

	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE		
	ONLINE	HYBRID	TRUANCY	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM	EXCUSED ABSENCES
Texas Education Agency	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Wyoming Department of Education	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
District Guidance					
Boston Public Schools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District of Columbia Public Schools	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
National Guidance					
Attendance Works	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Insight Policy Research	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

KEY FINDINGS



Districts may use a variety of measures to monitor student attendance and engagement during online instruction in either an entirely virtual or a hybrid learning environment. The measures most commonly referenced by profiled states, districts, and national organizations include:

- Confirmed presence
 - *During synchronous classes (e.g., based on online login at the designated time)*
 - *During scheduled meetings*
- Online student information system (SIS) and/or learning management system (LMS) access and/or usage
 - *Confirmed login*
 - *Amount of time spent engaged in learning activities*
 - *Completion of specific lessons/units*
 - *Completion of specific tasks*
- Assignment submission and/or completion
- Participation during synchronous classes
- Participation in discussion boards
- Student-teacher communication
- Parent-teacher communication (e.g., completion of wellness checks)



When selecting measures, districts must consider the logistics of monitoring student attendance and engagement, such as:

- How to collect data: Information captured by or entered into an existing online SIS and/or LMS may facilitate record-keeping. Yet, districts still must decide whether to record attendance *automatically* (e.g., based on a student's login, the frequency, duration, or nature of their usage, etc.) or require teachers to enter attendance *manually* based on some specified criteria (e.g., confirmed presence during a scheduled meeting, student-teacher communication, etc.).
- How often and when to collect data: Districts may record attendance on a daily and/or per class basis. Districts should track daily attendance for all students during online instruction. The timing and mechanism may depend on whether instruction occurs synchronously or asynchronously. During synchronous instruction, districts may count students who log into the online platform at the designated class time as present. Alternatively, during asynchronous instruction, districts may rely on an online SIS and/or LMS login either at a designated time or during a specified time period to determine attendance. Tracking attendance on a per-class basis as well appears more common in the case of middle and high schools than elementary schools (since younger students tend to change classrooms and/or teachers less frequently than older students).

Note that, even when districts rely on an existing online SIS and/or LMS to record attendance automatically, such data may not become available to teachers immediately.



Profiled organizations offer fewer insights related to monitoring student attendance challenges like truancy and chronic absenteeism during online instruction. Most profiled organizations do not address these attendance concerns in the context of online learning. Profiled organizations that *do* rely on definitions of truancy and chronic absenteeism that vary little, if at all, from those used for in-person instruction during previous school years. While acknowledging that attendance monitoring will differ, in general, during 2020-2021, these profiled organizations do not seem to note any considerations related to tracking truancy or chronic absenteeism, in particular.

SECTION I: STATE GUIDANCE

In this section, Hanover presents state-level guidance and recommendations for tracking student attendance in online and hybrid settings, as well as challenges to student attendance. This section primarily relies on information in state reopening plans and recent resources from state education agencies.

ALABAMA

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

To support Alabama districts, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) provides the [Roadmap to Reopening Schools](#), which includes general guidance and key considerations for tracking attendance as schools reopen using remote, hybrid, and in-person instructional models.³ According to state-level recommendations, districts should leverage the 2019 [Alabama Attendance Manual](#) for state codes regarding virtual learning and absences and consider the elements from the Roadmap to Reopening Schools outlined in Figure 1.1.⁴ The eighth consideration addresses tracking of COVID-19-related absences, and ALSDE provides screenshots to illustrate on pages 37 and 38.⁵

Figure 1.1: Key Considerations for Tracking Attendance in 2020-2021 in Alabama

1	Review ALSDE Attendance Manual on virtual learning attendance.
2	Review district policies and procedures for attendance and virtual learning, etc.
3	Revise district policies and/or procedures to include remote learning attendance parameters (if needed).
4	<p>Collaborate with local board attorney and other district leaders to consider how new blended and/or virtual learning may provide the opportunity for students to be “present” as it relates to COVID-19’s and other future pandemics’ possible impact to students including, but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Student is exposed to someone who tested positive and is advised or required to quarantine;▪ Student is deemed “high risk” by guardian or doctor and is advised to stay home for an extended period of time;▪ Student has underlining chronic health conditions, considered “high-risk” due to compromised immune system;▪ Parent does not feel safe sending student to school until vaccine is developed; or other as applicable.
5	If district policies and procedures are revised to include additional attendance parameters, LEAs must maintain alignment to ALSDE Attendance Manual.
6	<p>Examine sample blended and virtual learning attendance examples when developing district parameters (if applicable), including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Student daily sign-in to courses & participation in online coursework;▪ Coursework submissions and assessment completions;▪ Discussion board post minimums weekly.

³ [1] “Roadmap to Reopening Schools.” Alabama State Department of Education, August 24, 2020. <https://www.alsde.edu/COVID19%20Updates/Roadmap%20for%20Reopening%20Schools%20Revised%20August%2024%2020.pdf> [2] “Parent’s Guide to Alabama’s Roadmap to Reopening Schools.” Alabama State Department of Education, June 26, 2020. p. 2. <https://www.alsde.edu/Documents/RoadmapParentFAQJune262020.pdf>

⁴ [1] “Roadmap to Reopening Schools,” Op. cit., p. 36. [2] “Alabama Attendance Manual.” Alabama State Department of Education, 2019. <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/pss/Attendance/Absolute%20Final%202019%20Attendance%20Manual%20Revised1.pdf>

⁵ “Roadmap to Reopening Schools,” Op. cit., pp. 37–38.

7	<p>Consider sample “Attendance Parameters” to provide a scaffolded approach for students in the blended or virtual environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend 1 face-to-face meeting or class each 9 weeks; Require semester exams onsite (if possible); Maintain 80 or above average to remain in full virtual environment (if applicable); Require additional face-to-face sessions for courses with a grade of 65-79 (if applicable); or Require student to return to traditional or blended environment if student grade drops below a 65 until a designated time to return to virtual (if applicable).
8	<p>Utilize revisions to ALSDE Attendance Manual to include “All Day Other” codes and a “Non-Traditional School Type” code for 2020-2021 COVID-19. Additional information will be provided when changes are finalized in iNow and Attendance Manual.</p>

Source: Alabama State Department of Education⁶

As noted in the Parent’s Guide to the Roadmap to Reopening Schools, districts must design and prepare to implement remote, hybrid, and in-person learning plans. Thus, districts must specify how schools will track attendance during online and hybrid learning *beyond* state guidance. The sixth and seventh considerations in Figure 1.1 provide potential solutions in the context of online and hybrid learning, suggesting ways to credit student attendance and introduce interventions that require regular attendance monitoring.⁷ ALSDE also refers districts providing online instruction to its attendance suggestions for virtual schools. Recognizing the flexibility typically associated with online learning, this guidance recommends that districts consider the following metrics to assess student engagement and achievement:⁸

- Login time and requirements;
- Academic benchmarks;
- State testing and accountability; and
- Requirements through the local school system.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

The Roadmap to Reopening Schools advises districts to review the 2019 Alabama Attendance Manual—which discusses truancy and chronic absenteeism—when establishing 2020-2021 attendance plans. Figure 1.2 presents ALSDE’s definitions of and reporting systems for truancy and chronic absenteeism. For an illustration of Alabama’s process for addressing attendance issues, please refer to Appendix Q on page 123.

Figure 1.2: Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism in Alabama

STATE INFORMATION	TRUANCY	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
Definition	Unexcused absences or skipping school/class for a day or portion thereof	The percentage of students having 15 or more absences (i.e., excused and unexcused) in a given school year

⁶ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 36–37.

⁷ [1] “Roadmap to Reopening Schools,” Op. cit., p. 37. [2] “Parent’s Guide to Alabama’s Roadmap to Reopening Schools,” Op. cit., p. 2.

⁸ Bulleted text reproduced verbatim with modifications from: “Alabama Attendance Manual,” Op. cit., p. 16.

STATE INFORMATION	TRUANCY	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Districts analyze and match appropriate interventions/strategies with students who have as few as two absences, regardless of whether it is excused or unexcused through student and student advocacy relationships. ■ This strategy provides information imperative to breaking down barriers/obstacles impeding positive student attendance that consequently increases the students' academic performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Districts are encouraged to send a "nudge letter" to educate families on the effects of chronic absenteeism. Districts may include suggestions for achieving good school attendance. ■ Districts may include such a letter in the parent/student handbook where a signature is required verifying that the parent/guardian/student received the information. Individual student letters regarding chronic attendance are recommended in addition to a parent/student handbook disclosure.

Source: Alabama State Department of Education⁹

ALSDE recently announced plans to hold an *Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month 2020* event on September 30th. The following link presents the press release regarding the upcoming event as well as information about truancy, chronic absenteeism, and attendance efforts in Alabama districts.¹⁰

[Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month 2020 Press Release](#)

COLORADO

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Beyond the [Health Guidance by COVID-19 Phase](#) for reopening schools, the **Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides additional recommendations for district attendance policies, including flexibility with respect to definitions and tracking procedures, in other documentation.**¹¹ For the 2020-2021 academic year, CDE will allow districts to redefine how they record attendance. If a student demonstrates that they are "engaged in the educational process" online or in-person, then a district may consider them in attendance.¹² Forms of engagement include:¹³

- Presence during in-person instruction;
- Assignments completed at home;
- Logging into an online learning platform; and
- Other methods of tracking attendance during remote learning.

CDE notes that state law still requires schools to meet instructional hour requirements (e.g., 990 hours for elementary schools with 968 hours of teacher-student instruction and contact); however, this requirement now extends to include online learning or independent work. CDE holds districts responsible for determining

⁹ Figure text reproduced verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 52, 56, 59, 62.

¹⁰ Preceding information and following link obtained from: "Alabama Is Building Excellent School Attendance." Alabama State Department of Education, September 1, 2020. <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/comm/News%20Releases/9-1-20%20State%20Agencies%20Partner%20to%20Promote%20Importance%20of%20School%20Attendance%20and%20Awareness.pdf#search=truancy>

¹¹ "Reopening Schools: Health Guidance by COVID-19 Phase." Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, July 2020. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/20200720reopeningguidance>

¹² "CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year." Colorado Department of Education. p. 5. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/docs/cdefinance/CDE%20Policy%20on%20Instructional%20Hours%20and%20Attendance.pdf>

¹³ Bulleted text reproduced nearly verbatim from: Ibid.

which learning activities and forms of contact apply towards instructional hour requirements.¹⁴ Specifically, CDE states that:¹⁵

When calculating hours of remote learning for the purposes of determining teacher-pupil contact and teacher-pupil instruction, districts may base their calculation on academic content covered, student demonstrations of learning, estimated times for students to complete independent work, and/or other methods identified by the district to compare in-person learning to remote learning.

CDE also emphasizes that **COVID-19-driven changes to attendance policies and procedures do not apply to schools and programs that typically operate fully online.** Officially online schools in Colorado must continue to follow their original attendance policies and procedures, which record attendance through the methods described in Figure 1.3 for the data categories shown in Figure 1.4.¹⁶

Figure 1.3: Online School Attendance Methods in Colorado

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS
Minimum Login Time Requirements	Establishing a minimum amount of time that must be spent logged-in to course work per day or week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplest option to implement because attendance can be easily recorded in most SISs designed for use in brick-and-mortar schools Easy for an instructor to verify and report whether a student logged into course work for a sufficient amount of time Provides a comparable measure to the “seat time” measure that is used to calculate attendance in a brick-and-mortar school Does not take into account the amount of actual work completed by the student during the time logged in to course work Does not allow a high level of flexibility for students who are unable to fulfill a minimum number of hours or log in to course work during designated days and times
Specific Task Completion for a Given Time Period	Mandating that students complete a series of regularly scheduled tasks on a daily or weekly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a variety of measurement options, including any task or interaction that can be recorded electronically and contributes to student engagement (e.g., contacting the teacher by phone or email, participating in a discussion thread, attending a virtual tutoring session or webinar, and/or submitting a specific assignment) Fairly compatible with most SISs, especially if student task completion is recorded daily Allows for more flexibility as students can be allowed to complete tasks at any time during a given timeline or by a certain deadline
Minimum Lesson/Unit Completion Requirements	Tying attendance directly to what the student accomplishes and/or produces over a given period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed assignments essentially become the evidence that a student has been in attendance Affords the most flexibility and, if implemented correctly, holds students to the highest level of accountability The timeline established for completion of work is critical as some students may require more/less time to complete an assignment Extra time should not be the only accommodation used with students to whom extra time in the classroom may be given

Source: Colorado Department of Education¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 2–3.

¹⁵ Block quote reproduced verbatim from: Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷ Figure text reproduced nearly verbatim from: “Calculating and Reporting Attendance and Truancy in Online Schools.” Colorado Department of Education. pp. 1–2.
https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/onlinelearning/download/ol_attendance_guidance.pdf

Figure 1.4: Online School Attendance Data Categories in Colorado

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Student Total Days Attended	The aggregate numbers of whole and partial days the students have attended school for the current school year.
Student Total Days Excused Absent	The aggregate number of whole and partial days students had excused absences (out of school), for the current school year. Absence due to a suspension is excused.
Student Total Days Unexcused Absent	The aggregate number of whole and partial days students were absent (out of school), without being excused from a parent/guardian for the current school year.
Student Total Days Possible	The aggregate number of whole and partial days students would have attended school if there had been no absences for the current school year. This number should be the sum of Total Days Attended, Total Days Excused Absent and Total Days Unexcused Absent.
Habitually Truant Count (Four or more days in one month (A))	The unduplicated count of Habitually Truant students who are at least the age of six on or before August 1 of the year in question and under the age of seventeen years having four total days of Unexcused Absences from public school in any one calendar Month; calculated by the sum of Unexcused Absences converted to days and fractions of days.
Habitually Truant Count (Ten or more days in one school year (B))	The unduplicated count of Habitually Truant students who are at least the age of six on or before August 1 of the year in question and under the age of seventeen years having ten or more total days of Unexcused Absences, but never accumulated four or more total days of Unexcused Absences from that public school in any one calendar month; calculated by the sum of Unexcused Absences converted to days and fractions of days.
Habitually Truant Count (Met Both Conditions (A & B))	The unduplicated count of Habitually Truant students who are at least the age of six on or before August 1 of the year in question and under the age of seventeen years four or more total days of Unexcused Absences from the reporting public school in any one calendar Month and also accumulated ten or more total days Unexcused Absences from the same public school during the Reported School Year; calculated by the sum of Unexcused Absences converted to days and fractions of days.

Source: Colorado Department of Education¹⁸

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

CDE requires districts to continue tracking students with attendance challenges, such as truancy, chronic absenteeism, and/or COVID-19-related absences. However, CDE does not describe how districts should conduct such monitoring. Rather, CDE recommends that districts consider online learning attendance metrics when designating students as truant or demonstrating other attendance challenges.¹⁹

Chronic absenteeism calculations, which do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, may impact schools' funding. However, CDE cautions districts against prioritizing attendance at the expense of students' health and safety. Instead, CDE advises districts to consider recommending that students stay home "when they are sick, have health concerns/risks, or have family and household members with health concerns/risks."²⁰

For fully online schools and programs, which do not experience changes in attendance procedures due to COVID-19, CDE defines a student as truant if they are absent without a parent's excuse or leave school or class without a teacher's permission.²¹ As shown in Figure 1.4, Colorado also tracks habitual truancy, which includes students with four or more unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in one school year. However, according to CDE, *district policies* dictate both definitions of attendance (including authorized excuses) and methods of measurement.²²

¹⁸ Figure text reproduced nearly verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 3–4.

¹⁹ "CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year," Op. cit., pp. 5–6.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

²¹ "Calculating and Reporting Attendance and Truancy in Online Schools," Op. cit., p. 5.

²² Ibid.

TEXAS

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Reopening guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) indicates the attendance requirements for the in-person, hybrid, and remote approaches to instruction districts may implement during the 2020-2021 school year. Figure 1.5 presents attendance requirements for remote approaches (i.e., remote synchronous instruction, remote asynchronous instruction, and remote course completion).²³

Figure 1.5: 2020-2021 Remote Instruction and Attendance in Texas

APPROACH	ATTENDANCE QUALIFICATIONS	ATTENDANCE TRACKING DETAILS
Remote Synchronous Instruction*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must log in to the online learning platform at their teacher's designated time to receive credit for attendance. Students who do not log in at the appropriate time count as absent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers track daily attendance in a way that is similar to in-person classes, typically recording attendance in real time and/or the same day.
Remote Asynchronous Instruction*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers may use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instructional methods and take attendance as outlined in district plans. District plans note the instruction, engagement, monitoring, and support structures in place to determine full attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers track daily attendance using the student engagement specifications determined by their district. Tracking may not take place daily as students may engage in online learning at different times (e.g., 8:00 am, 11:00 pm), and systems may not report engagement until the following day. Engagement indicators approved by TEA include progress shown in an LMS, through student-teacher interactions, or through assignment submissions. Teachers then input attendance into an SIS. Students with synchronous and asynchronous classes may be marked as present or absent for each class.
Remote Course Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must complete the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) education program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive attendance credit for the full semester after completing the course. Students may count toward half- or full-day attendance depending on course hours (two hours or four hours, respectively). Elementary school students taking TXVSN courses receive full attendance credit for completing a course or no credit if a course is not completed.

Source: Texas Education Agency²⁴

*This TEA infographic discusses using Schoology to track attendance during synchronous and asynchronous remote instruction.²⁵

Furthermore, TEA provides general guidance for instruction delivered through online, remote formats, indicating that:²⁶

- The district must follow the 90/10 minimum attendance rule in which students must attend at least 90 percent of courses to qualify for promotion;
- Schools and grade levels *within* a district may track asynchronous attendance and engagement differently; and

²³ "SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ." Texas Education Agency, August 20, 2020. pp. 2-4.

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-2020-21-Attendance-and-Enrollment.pdf>

²⁴ Figure adapted from: Ibid., pp. 2-4, 14.

²⁵ "Monitor Online Attendance with Schoology." Texas Education Agency.

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/Monitor_Attendance_Online_with_Schoology_v20200817.pdf

²⁶ Bulleted text adapted from: "SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ," Op. cit., pp. 14-20.

- Students cannot earn attendance credit retroactively or proactively if they complete assignments used to measure a day's attendance at a later or earlier date.

For students engaged in hybrid learning, TEA permits multiple methods of tracking attendance which may change based on the day and/or instructional format. If these students receive *online* instruction, then the attendance methods reflect the guidelines shown in Figure 1.5. Alternatively, if these students receive *in-person* instruction, then teachers determine attendance based on whether students are physically present. In situations where students attend in-person classes, but the teacher provides instruction from an alternative location, an eligible school staff member records attendance.²⁷

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

TEA emphasizes that truancy laws remain in place for the 2020-2021 school year for all students, whether they learn in school or at home.²⁸ However, TEA does not provide additional recommendations for monitoring students with attendance challenges such as truancy or chronic absenteeism. Additionally, TEA does not indicate how districts should track excused absences due to COVID-19 symptoms, contact, or diagnosis. TEA does state that districts cannot require a student to receive online instruction when a parent requests in-person instruction unless a student is:²⁹

- Lab-confirmed to have COVID-19;
- Symptomatic for COVID-19; or
- Determined to have close contact with an individual lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.

Therefore, districts appear to track COVID-19-related absences through students' health status and lab confirmations, while teachers monitor these students' attendance and engagement during online instruction using the approaches in Figure 1.5.

WYOMING

Following school closures in spring 2020, Wyoming set expectations that districts would closely monitor student attendance despite learning online.³⁰ Each Wyoming district then submitted and received approval for an "Adapted Learning Plan" by early April. These 48 Adapted Learning Plans highlight attendance measures in addition to communication strategies, instructional approaches, special education requirements, and other education needs.³¹ Given the speed with which these districts implemented the plans and the success of such measures, CRPE cites Wyoming as "one of the standard-bearers when it comes to setting clear expectations for remote learning and following up to make sure districts meet its expectations."³²

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Since the initial transition from in-person to online instruction in spring 2020, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) has provided updated guidance in **2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts**.³³ WDE outlines three distance learning plans within a resident district: remote education,

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5, 8.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁹ Bulleted text reproduced nearly verbatim from: Ibid., p. 13.

³⁰ Lake, R. and B. Dusseault. "Remote Classes Are in Session for More School Districts, But Attendance Plans Are Still Absent." Center on Reinventing Public Education, April 27, 2020. <https://www.crpe.org/thelens/remote-classes-are-session-more-school-districts-attendance-plans-are-still-absent>

³¹ Gabrukiewicz, T. "WDE Approves All 48 School District Adapted Learning Plans." Wyoming Department of Education, April 2, 2020. <https://edu.wyoming.gov/blog/2020/04/02/wde-approves-all-48-school-district-adapted-learning-plans/>

³² Lake and Dusseault, Op. cit.

³³ "2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts." Wyoming Department of Education, July 13, 2020. <https://1ddlxtt2jowkvs672myo6z14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Distance-Learning-Guide.pdf>

classroom-based virtual education, and virtual education.³⁴ Figure 1.6 presents each approach, highlighting differences and describing student engagement.

Figure 1.6: 2020-2021 Distance Learning Approaches in Wyoming

DEFINITION	DISTINGUISHING FEATURES	DELIVERY OPTIONS
Remote Education within Resident District		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote education means classes delivered by a teacher located in a physical classroom with students present while also providing simultaneous remote instruction. Remote education instruction is delivered through interactive, synchronous technology which allows the student receiving the remote education to ask questions, make comments, and interact in real-time with the teacher, classroom students, and other remote students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote education is synchronous delivery with the teacher instructing the class and a portion of the students assigned to the class located in a physical classroom interacting with students located off-site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronous delivery from student's live classroom to student off-site. Synchronous delivery from live classroom in another school in the district to a classroom in the remote student's school. Synchronous delivery from live classroom in another school in the district to student off-site
Classroom-Based Virtual Education within Resident District		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom-based virtual education means classes intended for classroom instruction that may also be instructed through technology outside the physical classroom. The virtual education instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and delivery must be available to any student eligible to be enrolled in the class including those who may not have Internet access and those who may only attend through virtual education. Classroom-based virtual education may only be delivered to students who reside in the district and have primary enrollment in the school providing the instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person, classroom instruction is used in conjunction with virtual education instruction for a portion of students off-site or school days when all students are off-site. Both types of instruction must be available for the full scope and sequence of the course throughout the school year and in-person instruction, virtual education instruction, or both are delivered depending on need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronous or asynchronous virtual education delivery of classroom-based courses when a student is off-site in conjunction with in-person, classroom instruction for classmates who are in school. Synchronous or asynchronous virtual education delivery of classroom-based courses when all students are off-site. Synchronous or asynchronous virtual education delivery of classroom-based courses when there are students in the classroom but teacher is off-site for situations such as quarantine.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 1, 4, 7.

DEFINITION	DISTINGUISHING FEATURES	DELIVERY OPTIONS
Virtual Education within Resident District		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual education means school district programs and classes approved by the agency pursuant to W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxxi), W.S. 21-13-330(f-k), and the Chapter 41 Virtual Education Rules for delivery when the teacher and student are in separate locations. Virtual education instruction is primarily delivered through technology and can be asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of both. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual education classes are designed exclusively for distance delivery and include a teacher who instructs students and interacts with them through the technology in the course platform. The separation between the student and the teacher substantially limits or prevents in-person instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts may purchase part-time or full-time virtual education courses from another district with an approved virtual education program through an agreement. The courses are delivered by the other district as concurrent enrollment while the resident district maintains student membership. Districts may apply to provide part-time or full-time virtual education using vendor courses and teachers, district-developed courses and teachers, or any combination thereof.

Source: Wyoming Department of Education³⁵

For the first approach, remote education, WDE recommends attendance tracking measures depending on the combination of local teachers and students in the classroom and at home, as described in Figure 1.7.³⁶

Figure 1.7: Attendance Tracking for Remote Instruction in Wyoming

DELIVERY STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION	ATTENDANCE TRACKING GUIDANCE	REPORTING GUIDANCE
Delivery from Student's Classroom to Home	The classroom teacher instructs the students physically present while also instructing students from the class who are off-site through interactive video and audio technology that allows remote students to participate in real-time with the teacher, classroom students, and other remote students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classroom teacher takes attendance in the SIS, indicating any students participating off-site through remote education. The teacher does this each class period for middle, junior high, and high school and twice daily in elementary school. Documentation Consideration: Keep and store a record of the dates and enrolled students receiving remote instruction off-site. 	All of the data collections for remote education are reported in the same manner as typical classroom courses, including the medium of instruction being listed as face-to-face for the school year.

³⁵ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

DELIVERY STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION	ATTENDANCE TRACKING GUIDANCE	REPORTING GUIDANCE
Delivery Between Schools	The classroom teacher instructs the students physically present while also instructing students located in another school or at home through interactive video and audio technology that allows remote students to participate in real-time with the teacher, classroom students, and other remote students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student at School: The school where the student is primarily enrolled, and located in, during remote instruction delivery from another school, takes seat time attendance in the SIS for the remote education class(es). ▪ Student Off-Site: The classroom teacher takes attendance in the SIS, indicating any students off-site participating through remote education each class period for middle, junior high, and high school and twice daily in elementary school. The attendance record must be shared with the school where the student is enrolled. 	Both the school where the student is enrolled and the school providing the remote education class(es) follow remote education and concurrent enrollment reporting methods per the guidance in Appendix C of the WDE684–WISE Teacher/Course/Student Fall, Spring, End-of-Year Collection Guidebook.

Source: Wyoming Department of Education³⁷

In the second instructional approach, classroom-cased virtual education, teachers instruct students in-person and at home synchronously or asynchronously.³⁸ Should schools fully close, instruction continues with teachers and students all engaging remotely. WDE notes that teachers monitor both in-person and remote attendance using an SIS, though teachers may take remote students' attendance once at the end of the week. In this instructional approach, districts must decide which activities count toward attendance (e.g., submitting assignments, participating in synchronous lessons). Furthermore, attendance tracking occurs at different times for elementary, middle, and high school students. Specifically, teachers track elementary school student attendance twice per day, while middle, junior high, and high school teachers track attendance for every class.³⁹ Schools using this approach report attendance using traditional classroom reporting practices, and WDE recommends keeping and storing records of:⁴⁰

- Attendance for students off-site in the district [SIS]; and
- Virtual education course participation used to verify attendance for students off-site.

The third instructional approach, virtual education, may occur at a school or off-site.⁴¹ Students usually engage in virtual education through remote learning with teachers and students in other locations. However, if the teacher and program operate in the student's district, in-person instruction may occur. Alternatively, students may participate in virtual courses facilitated by other districts, vendors, and/or teachers. For all virtual education delivery methods, WDE offers the attendance tracking guidance shown in Figure 1.8.⁴²

³⁷ Figure text reproduced nearly verbatim from: Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Bulleted text adapted from: Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

Figure 1.8: Attendance Tracking Guidance for Virtual Education in Wyoming

DELIVERY APPROACH	ATTENDANCE TRACKING GUIDANCE
Student at School	Seat-time attendance in the student information system is recorded for the virtual education classes when the student attends school and is physically present during virtual education course delivery from another district, another school, or a vendor in the resident district's approved program.
Student Off-Site: District Program & District Teacher	Virtual education course participation requirements are set by the resident district for the within-district virtual education program and are tracked in the learning management system used for course delivery. The district virtual education teacher verifies attendance in the student information system weekly, based on the student's participation during the past week.
Student Off-Site: District Program & Vendor Teacher	As part of the agreement with the virtual education vendor, the vendor provides participation tracking documentation from the learning management system that is verified by the vendor virtual education teacher. The district-assigned learning coach has access to the participation documentation and the virtual education teacher's verification of attendance and records attendance weekly in the district student information system for the class(es) based on the information received. The participation documentation is stored by the resident district for future audit or monitoring purposes.
Student Off-Site—Another District's Program & Teacher	If the virtual education courses are being delivered by another district's approved virtual education program and teacher, as part of the agreement between districts, the district with the program provides participation tracking documentation from the learning management system that is verified by the virtual education teacher. The resident district's district-assigned learning coach has access to the participation documentation and the virtual education teacher's verification of attendance and records attendance weekly in the district student information system for the class(es) based on the information received. The participation documentation is stored by the resident district for future audit or monitoring purposes.

Source: Wyoming Department of Education⁴³

Although the instructional approaches above state that students may receive in-person or remote instruction, and all districts must include a hybrid component in their school reopening plan, WDE offers limited attendance guidance for hybrid environments.⁴⁴ According to available information, **WDE recommends that schools using hybrid learning models track attendance differently when students engage in remote instruction compared to off-site, district-based virtual education, specifically:**⁴⁵

- **Remote Education:** Attendance is tracked twice a day (elementary) or class period (middle/secondary); and
- **Off-Site Virtual Education:** Attendance is tracked at least once a week through virtual education participation metrics.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

WDE offers little-to-no guidance for monitoring students with attendance challenges. For example, key reopening and distance learning guidance documents—2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts and Smart Start Guidance—do not reference truancy or chronic absenteeism.⁴⁶ However, the latter document indicates that students or staff members who contract, come into close contact with, or must

⁴³ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid.

⁴⁴ [1] "Smart Start Guidance." Wyoming Department of Education, July 1, 2020. p. 2. <https://1ddlxtt2jowkvs672myo6z14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Smart-Start-Guidance.pdf> [2] "2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts," Op. cit.

⁴⁵ Bulleted text reproduced nearly verbatim from: "Smart Start Guidance," Op. cit., p. 17.

⁴⁶ [1] "2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts," Op. cit. [2] "Smart Start Guidance," Op. cit.

leave schools due to COVID-19 should engage in homebound instruction.⁴⁷ Under Wyoming Statute 21-4-402:⁴⁸

The board of trustees of each school district shall offer homebound instruction for each pupil in the district who is hospitalized or homebound for more than one (1) week because of injury or illness.

This statute suggests that a COVID-19 diagnosis or close contact with someone confirmed as having COVID-19 excuses students from attending school in person. However, WDE does not specify how districts should track homebound students and their engagement in instruction.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Smart Start Guidance,” Op. cit., p. 4.

⁴⁸ Block quote reproduced verbatim from: “2019 Wyoming Statutes :: Title 21 - Education :: Chapter 4 - Pupils :: Article 4 - Isolation :: Section 21-4-402 - Instruction for Hospitalized or Homebound Pupils.” Justia Law.
<https://law.justia.com/codes/wyoming/2019/title-21/chapter-4/article-4/section-21-4-402/>

⁴⁹ “Smart Start Guidance,” Op. cit.

SECTION II: DISTRICT GUIDANCE

In this section, Hanover includes district-level plans for monitoring attendance during online and hybrid learning. This section relies primarily on information contained in district reopening plans and other COVID-19-related documentation, as well as district attendance policies.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

According to Boston Public Schools' (BPS's) reopening guidance, teachers in Grades K-12 take attendance every day and for every class, if applicable, through the Aspen SIS.⁵⁰ State guidelines require BPS to record attendance daily and specify which students attend in-person and remotely within the Aspen attendance tool.⁵¹ BPS families choose whether their child receives hybrid or fully remote instruction—instructional models that Figure 2.1 presents in greater detail.⁵²

Figure 2.1: Reopening Instructional Models in Boston Public Schools

HYBRID MODEL	FULLY REMOTE MODEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are assigned into Group A or Group B Group A attends school in person on Mondays and Tuesdays Group B attends school in person on Thursdays and Fridays All students learn online on Wednesdays Mix of large group and small group instruction and projects Access to physical education, arts, and enrichment Students are provided meals at school See remote section for days students are online learning Buildings are cleaned, disinfected, and sanitized regularly throughout the day and on Wednesdays and Weekends Students and staff wear masks Hallways and classrooms prepared for safe distancing Home health screenings performed daily Healthy and Safety Protocols in place in all schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students learn online Monday- Friday Students in virtual classrooms with classmates Mix of large group and small group instruction and projects Access to physical education, arts, and enrichment Schools provide schedules Families are provided support through training, conferencing, and virtual home visits and regular check-ins from their child's learning team Students are provided Chromebooks and access to Wifi at home and access to meals Families are provided support through training, conferencing, and virtual home visits and regular check-ins from their child's learning team

Source: Boston Public Schools⁵³

As shown above, BPS schools divide students engaged in hybrid instruction into two groups. Therefore, teachers must "record attendance in the context of the student's cohort location."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ "School Reopening Fall 2020, Draft 2: Returning Boston Strong." Boston Public Schools, August 14, 2020. p. 70.
<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/2894/BPS%20Fall%202020%20Reopening%20Plan%20Draft%202020.14.2020-updated%208-21.pdf>

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 70–71.

⁵² "Reopening 2020." Boston Public Schools. <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/8298>

⁵³ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid.

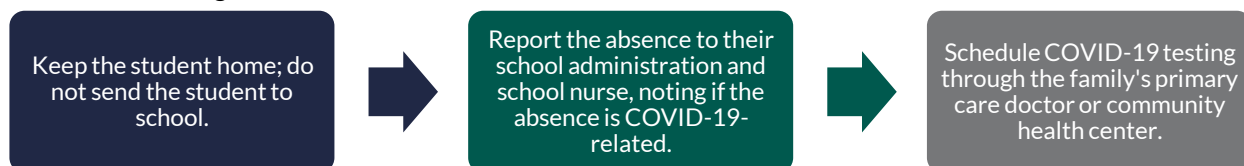
⁵⁴ "School Reopening Fall 2020, Draft 2: Returning Boston Strong," Op. cit., p. 70.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

Aspen also contains student schedules, enabling BPS staff to not only track attendance, but also determine where students *should* be if not present. To support student attendance, BPS employs supervisors of attendance to connect with absent students and their families. Supervisors work within the Opportunity Youth Department, which serves “to decrease truancy and chronic absenteeism in the City of Boston.”⁵⁵ Collaborating with schools and juvenile court staff, these supervisors support attendance during various reopening models to ensure students continue to engage in school during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁶

BPS requires students diagnosed with, exposed to, or showing symptoms of COVID-19 to follow the steps shown in Figure 2.2, beginning with not attending school.⁵⁷

Figure 2.2: COVID-19-Driven Absence Procedure in Boston Public Schools



Source: Boston Public Schools⁵⁸

This process demonstrates how BPS monitors attendance *and* tracks COVID-19 cases throughout its schools. BPS also outlines how it adjusts instructional models—which impact attendance and tracking measures—when one or more individuals in a school show signs of COVID-19. This information appears on page 38 of the district’s reopening plan [here](#).⁵⁹

BPS’s standard attendance tracking and reporting information, available through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) document below, includes additional details on how Massachusetts districts monitor, investigate, and report student absences. Although this information reflects 2018 protocols, the document includes 17 attendance scenarios and how districts such as BPS report these cases, which may still apply in many situations.⁶⁰

[DESE Attendance and Dropout Reporting Guidance](#)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) currently operates using a completely virtual instructional model and plans to continue online learning with mandatory virtual attendance through early November 2020.⁶¹ During this time, DCPS tracks attendance and monitors engagement through synchronous and asynchronous means, as shown in Figure 2.3.

⁵⁵ “Attendance.” Boston Public Schools. <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/6825>

⁵⁶ [1] Ibid. [2] “School Reopening Fall 2020, Draft 2: Returning Boston Strong.” Op. cit., p. 70.

⁵⁷ “School Reopening Fall 2020, Draft 2: Returning Boston Strong,” Op. cit., pp. 32–33.

⁵⁸ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁰ Preceding information and link below obtained from: “DESE Attendance and Dropout Reporting Guide.” Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Zx9nDhblE4CEaX8WdBLIjVvrEws-Zcig>

⁶¹ [1] “Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance.” District of Columbia Public Schools. p. 1. https://45biv636w8lm1agg3ozqtqg1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL_DCPS_Virtual_Attendance_Guidance.08.21.20.pdf [2] “#ReopenStrong.” District of Columbia Public Schools. <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/>

Figure 2.3: Attendance and Engagement in District of Columbia Public Schools

TRACKING STUDENT ATTENDANCE	TRACKING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Students (or parents on behalf of younger students) are expected to sign into Canvas daily, and daily attendance will be recorded through this action. Students will be expected to log into Canvas each school day at least once between 6:00 am and 11:59 pm. Students who do not log in to Canvas will be recorded as absent for the day. Absences will be imported into Aspen automatically overnight. There are no additional steps required for school staff to ensure that absences from Canvas import into Aspen each night.	Schools will be expected to utilize additional measures beyond daily attendance as indicators of student engagement in learning. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation in live classes; ■ Access and utilization of other learning platforms; ■ Submission of assignments; and ■ Results of student and family outreach efforts.

Source: District of Columbia Public Schools⁶²

Notably, DCPS tracks student attendance daily rather than during each course, and failing to attend synchronous instruction does not negatively impact students' attendance records. Instead, and as noted in Figure 2.3, students receive credit for attending school when they log into Canvas, the LMS, each day.⁶³ As such, teachers cannot log students as arriving late or tardy, and students receive credit for attendance if they participate in online learning at least once between 6:00 am and 11:59 pm that day. Furthermore, the DCPS grading policy for the 2020-2021 school year states that:⁶⁴

Poor course attendance can certainly result in a student not adequately progressing and could lead to course failure; as such, teachers are expected to monitor student engagement regularly. However, because course level attendance will not be taken, course failure will not be associated to attendance for the 20-21 SY.

DCPS caveats that, if a student cannot log into Canvas due to technology or connectivity challenges, the student or their parent must contact the school's attendance staff member, explain the problem, and indicate what the student plans to work on for that day instead. The attendance staff member then credits the student with attending school that day.⁶⁵

Additionally, because DCPS supports a completely virtual instructional model, attendance guidelines do not explain how the district would track attendance in a hybrid environment.⁶⁶

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

DCPS outlines specific interventions that staff members can implement when students do not log into Canvas and accumulate absences. These interventions occur when students meet specific truancy and chronic absence benchmarks, as shown in Figure 2.4, which the district may monitor after Canvas login data are imported into Aspen. Though closely aligned with the 2018 [DCPS Attendance and Truancy Policy](#), interventions for the 2020-2021 school year now also include wellness checks rather than simply notifying parents of absences and potential withdrawal.⁶⁷

⁶² Figure text reproduced nearly verbatim from: "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit., p. 1.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Block quote reproduced verbatim from: "School Year 2020-21 Pre-K- 12 Grading Policy: Updated 8.6.20." District of Columbia Public Schools, August 6, 2020. p. 7. https://45biv636w8lm1agg3ozqtqg1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WEB_SY20-21_DCPS-Grading-Guidance.pdf

⁶⁵ "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit., p. 1.

⁶⁶ "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit.

⁶⁷ [1] "DCPS Attendance and Truancy Policy." District of Columbia Public Schools, August 13, 2018.

https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/page_content/attachments/FINAL%20DCPS%20Attendance%20and%20Truancy%20Policy%2008-21-18.pdf [2] "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit., pp. 2-3.









Figure 2.4: Absences and Interventions in District of Columbia Public Schools

ABSENCES	INTERVENTIONS
1 day of unexcused absence	Contact parent on the same day and each time a student has the equivalent of one day of unexcused absence, with daily follow-ups as necessary.
3 days of absences (excused or unexcused)	Phone call home after three absences to complete a wellness check. The wellness check shall include two components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Discussion of the student's attendance, including the identification of any barriers related to logging in to record attendance; and 2) Discussion of any other challenges and potential resources needed to support student success ensure appropriate linkages to additional resources are made.
5 days of unexcused cumulative absences	Send 5-Day Unexcused Absence Letter to parent and refer student to Student Support Team (SST) for an attendance intervention conference to be held within five days of the referral. (Applicable to five unexcused absences within one term.) The SST will develop an action plan in partnership with the student and the student's parent.
7 days of unexcused cumulative absences	Send Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) warning letter to parent.
10 days of unexcused cumulative absences	Student is considered chronically truant. Contact the District Child Family Services Agency (CFSA) for students aged 5-13. Refer student for follow-up attendance SST interventions for students aged 14 and older. The SST assigned to the student will notify school leader of action plan within two days of the referral.
15 days of unexcused cumulative absences	Submit referral within two days to Court Social Services Division (CSS) for students aged 14-17.
20 days of unexcused consecutive absences	Conduct wellness check (see above requirements) through telephone calls, texts, emails and contact emergency and other [known] contacts and consult with attendance specialist prior to making a withdrawal determination.

Source: District of Columbia Public Schools⁶⁸

Additionally, DCPS appears to track illness-related, excused absences through Canvas logs, Aspen data, and doctors' notes.⁶⁹ Figure 2.4 describes the medical and other absences DCPS considers excused. Although excused absences generally do not necessitate an intervention, the district may require proof from a parent, guardian, or doctor or some other form of documentation (e.g., from a funeral or court appearance).⁷⁰







Figure 2.5: 2020-2021 Excused Absences in District of Columbia Public Schools

	Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more cumulative days in a term)		Religious event celebration outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days)
	Illness of a child, for parenting students (a doctor's note for the student's child is required when the student is absent five or more cumulative days in a term)		Absences to allow students to visit their parent/guardian who is in the military, immediately before, during, or after deployment
	Medical or dental appointments for the student		College visits for students in grades 9-12 (up to three cumulative days)
	Death in the student's immediate family		School visits for students in kindergarten through 8th grade (one day)

⁶⁸ Figure reproduced verbatim from: "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit., pp. 2-3.

⁶⁹ [1] "Reopen Strong - Virtual Attendance Guidance," Op. cit. [2] "Attendance." District of Columbia Public Schools. <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/resources/attendance/>

⁷⁰ "Attendance," Op. cit.

	Exclusion by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons		Absences of expectant or parenting students for a time period specified by their doctor and any accommodations mandated by law
	Necessity for a student to attend a judicial or administrative proceeding, or court-ordered activity, as a party to the action or under subpoena		Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
	Observance of a religious holiday		An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS

Source: District of Columbia Public Schools⁷¹

⁷¹ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid.

SECTION III: NATIONAL GUIDANCE

In this section, Hanover provides student attendance information and practices from national organizations. This section also links to the national organizations' key resources, which expand on attendance strategies that districts may use during remote and hybrid learning.

ATTENDANCE WORKS

Attendance Works offers widely referenced guidance regarding student attendance, particularly how to address chronic absenteeism and how to monitor and support attendance during COVID-19. For example, the organization partnered with FutureEd to create the [Attendance Playbook](#).⁷² This publication, which uses a tiered framework to present strategies for supporting student attendance, is cited as a key resource by other organizations, including the:⁷³

- Pennsylvania Department of Education;
- Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- New York State Center for School Safety; and
- California Charter Schools Association.

Additionally, Attendance Works compiles [this list of resources](#), including attendance-specific articles, that teachers and other educators may use to support students during COVID-19.⁷⁴

MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

As the 2020-2021 school year begins, Attendance Works and FutureEd recommend that districts learn from spring 2020 experiences and support student attendance in in-person, online, or hybrid learning environments by focusing on four main categories: contact, connectivity, engagement, and participation. Figure 3.1 presents examples of metrics for each category.⁷⁵

Figure 3.1: Categories and Metrics for Supporting Student Attendance

CATEGORY	METRICS
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Percentage of families with working contact information■ Percentage of students unreachable
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Percentage of students and families with equipment and internet access■ Percentage of students able to log in to online learning systems■ Percentage of teachers with the equipment, access, and skills for distance learning

⁷² Jordan, P. "Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era." Attendance Works, June 2020. https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition-1.pdf

⁷³ [1] Preceding link obtained from: Jordan, P. "Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era." Attendance Works, June 2020. https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition-1.pdf [2] Bulleted information obtained from: "Measuring, Reporting, and Improving Attendance in SY 2020-21." Pennsylvania Department of Education, August 5, 2020. <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/CreatingEquitableSchoolSystems/FocusEffectiveInstruction/Assessment/Pages/Attendance.aspx> [3] "Attendance & Truancy: Questions & Answers for School District." Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/Attendance%20Rules%20FAQ_August%202020.pdf [4] "New York State Center for School Safety." New York State Center for School Safety. <https://www.nyscfss.org> [5] "COVID-19 Support Center." California Charter Schools Association. <https://info.ccsa.org/en/covid-19-resources>

⁷⁴ "Coronavirus: Resources for Educators." Attendance Works, March 9, 2020. <https://www.attendanceworks.org/coronavirus-resources-for-educators/>

⁷⁵ Jordan, Op. cit., pp. 4–5.

CATEGORY	METRICS
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students regularly engaging with teachers remotely Percentage of families regularly engaging with schools remotely
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students participating in classes Percentage of students completing all assignments Percentage of students partially completing assignments

Source: Attendance Works⁷⁶

Attendance Works also describes how districts may calculate attendance in online learning environments, including in the context of hybrid instructional models (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Process for Calculating Attendance



Source: Attendance Works⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Figure adapted, with metrics reproduced nearly verbatim, from: Ibid.

⁷⁷ Figure text reproduced nearly verbatim from: "Monitoring Attendance in Distance Learning." Attendance Works, July 22, 2020. <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/monitoring-attendance-in-distance-learning/>

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

Attendance Works describes strategies and supports districts and schools can implement according to students' "level of absenteeism."⁷⁸ Much of the organization's information regarding truant, chronically absent, or excused students emphasizes strategies for supporting them instead of tracking their attendance or determining their level of absenteeism. However, Attendance Works does offer three COVID-19-driven strategies that use attendance metrics to reduce chronic absenteeism as seen in Figure 3.3.⁷⁹

Figure 3.3: Data-Driven Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Leverage existing attendance data to identify where to provide additional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic absence data, along with other information collected before schools closed, provide information on which students, populations, and schools need more support (e.g., food, physical or mental health resources, access to learning materials or technology). These data, along with information about ethnicity and home language, can be used to determine which staff might best be able to reach out to students and families. Following contact, the conversations with families should focus on determining additional supports and problem-solving, not talking about absences. Districts should help schools document information obtained during outreach. A centralized system that tracks the various needs and supports offered can ensure families are not called multiple times for the same information.
Monitor participation to support early warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics, including contact, connectivity, relationships, and participation, should be used to establish early warning systems and inform program and policy decisions. Together with chronic absence data, these metrics can help reveal what challenges need to be addressed to ensure an equal opportunity to learn. Given the unprecedented nature of the current situation, districts and states should avoid using attendance or participation data to allocate funding, take legal action, or reestablish high stakes accountability. Rather, districts and states can and should invest in developing and researching the best ways to measure lack of participation and then later use the experience to inform what should be adopted as a common metric.
Use data to strengthen the transition back to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absenteeism data (e.g., chronic absences, no-shows, low participation) collected before and after the COVID-19 pandemic are especially valuable because they are now some of the few consistent, real-time metrics still available to support data-driven approaches to improving learning. Schools must monitor who does not attend the first day of school and use their chronic absence data (broken down by schools, grade levels, ethnicity, home language, special education, etc.) and other metrics to show situations that require immediate problem solving and support.

Source: Attendance Works⁸⁰

INSIGHT POLICY RESEARCH

Insight Policy Research, a research firm located in Arlington, Virginia, recently published [**Promising Practices Brief: Improving Student Engagement and Attendance During COVID-19 School Closures**](#).⁸¹ This document

⁷⁸ Jordan, Op. cit., p. 1.

⁷⁹ "Key Concepts for Leveraging Chronic Absence During the Coronavirus Pandemic." Attendance Works, July 22, 2020. <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/key-concepts-for-leveraging-chronic-absence-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

⁸⁰ Figure text adapted from: Ibid.

⁸¹ [1] "Contact Us." Insight Policy Research. <http://insightpolicyresearch.com/contact-us/> [2] Chambers, D., J. Scala, and D. English. "Promising Practices Brief: Improving Student Engagement and Attendance During COVID-19 School Closures." Insight Policy

provides information on student engagement, including attendance tracking practices, based on research and interviews with district leaders and a distance learning provider.














MONITORING ATTENDANCE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Insight Policy Research's district contacts highlight student attendance and engagement practices during school closures and online learning that resemble those recommended and used by the states and districts profiled in the previous sections. Such practices include:⁸²

- Tracking student attendance during live instruction;
- Tracking student completion and submission of assignments;
- Scheduling a weekly touchpoint between the teacher and students as a wellness and attendance check; and
- Prioritizing wellness and social and emotional learning over participation in remote learning.

Additionally, Insight Policy Research notes that teachers may leverage LMSs and their ability to track student participation and engagement. Systems may track the measures shown in Figure 3.4. Although these measures stem from research on postsecondary students, teachers in Grades K-12 also may find them applicable in online and hybrid learning environments, particularly at the secondary level.

Figure 3.4: Student Engagement Metrics Tracked by Online Platforms

 Time on online platform (hours)	 Time watching videos (hours)	 Number of videos accessed
 Number of login sessions per week	 Mean length of session (hours)	 Mean time between sessions (hours)
 Quiz submission timeliness	 Proportion of session time spent watching videos	 Average platform time per week
 Number of revisited video lectures	 Number of discussion forum visits	 Number of forum contributions
	 Percentage of time spent on quizzes	

Source: Insight Policy Research⁸³

MONITORING ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

Insight Policy Research does not appear to offer specific recommendations or guidance on how to track students with truancy challenges, chronic absenteeism, or excused absences due to COVID-19. However, the

Research, July 2020. https://insightpolicyresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NSAES_COVID19_Whitepaper_Final_508.pdf

⁸² Bulleted text reproduced nearly verbatim from: Chambers, Scala, and English, Op. cit., p. 6.

⁸³ Figure text reproduced verbatim from: Ibid., p. 7.

organization notes that Alexandria City Public Schools uses the following strategies to monitor and support high levels of attendance and engagement during online learning:⁸⁴

- Teachers must dedicate a minimum of one hour a day to student and family communication;
- A virtual “morning meeting” is a primary touchpoint for most students;
- If a student does not report to the morning meeting, then the teacher follows up with the parent or family by email or phone. Teachers document these calls in a shared call log;
- For Grades 3–12, teachers can see which students log in daily in Canvas and which students complete assignments;
- When unable to reach the family, teachers notify a social worker or assistant principal for follow-up outreach. These calls also appear in a shared call log; and
- The district issues an ongoing engagement survey to students, families, and teachers to measure engagement and inform formative improvements to instructional planning, delivery, and other supports.

⁸⁴ Bulleted text reproduced verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 15.

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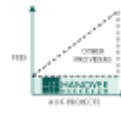
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