

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM REPORT



**STUDENTS WHO ARE CHRONICALLY ABSENT\* ARE LESS LIKELY to meet academic benchmarks, compared to their peers who attend school regularly. The impact of these absences compounds over time, contributing to academic struggles and, in some cases, long-term disengagement from education.**

This report explores the practices of several Indianapolis charter and innovation schools that have successfully reduced chronic absenteeism in their schools, as indicated by attendance data from the Indiana Department of Education.

## Advancing the Work: Insights and Strategies for the Future

Several common challenges were identified by all schools:

- Inconsistent student transportation and the financial responsibility of providing transportation for students experiencing special circumstances
- Shifting student demographics, especially an influx of students immigrating to the United States.
- Affordable housing shortages.
- Limited access to healthcare.
- Mental health barriers.

Schools are proactively addressing attendance barriers within their control by addressing four key areas:

1. Cultivating environments where students and families feel a sense of belonging.
  - a. They are relentless about relationships and ensuring every student knows they have a caring adult in the building.
  - b. They prioritize recruiting and retaining a diverse staff.

\* Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days in an academic year.

2. Consistently tracking attendance and building attendance expectations into school culture.
  - a. Teachers often take the lead in the initial monitoring and relationship building.
  - b. School leadership teams and support staff regularly review attendance trends and identify resources to address barriers.
  - c. Attendance goals are built into board goals and reports, and in one case, are part of staff evaluation metrics.
3. Responding swiftly to issues.
  - a. When data is tracked effectively, staff are able to identify problems sooner.
  - b. Schools have a clear process and identified resources in place to react quickly when attendance concerns surface.
4. Collaborating with their community and external partners to address obstacles to consistent attendance.
  - a. Schools emphasize the importance of viewing parents and families as genuine partners in student learning and attendance.
  - b. Family communication tools and systems are in place used consistently.
  - c. Leveraging their autonomy and benefits in size and structure, schools can more easily learn individual family needs and respond accordingly. ✨

To read the full report, scan the QR code or visit [themindtrust.org/absenteeismreport](http://themindtrust.org/absenteeismreport).



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