



Annual Truancy Report

September 2018



September 2018

Dear District of Columbia Residents,

In compliance with Section 38-203(i) of the District of Columbia Code, DC Public Schools (DCPS) is pleased to report a summary of the District's truancy data for School Year 2017-2018 to the Mayor and the Office

rytr.37(7)-m.4(7)-3.2t3 a1t8 dt.9 (e)-3.2t2our students, families, and staff believe students and families must be empowered with information to understand the impact of each day of learning.

3. Finally, we are **Proactively Engaging** all of our partners. We believe that engaging and partnering with our stakeholders will allow us to appropriately prioritize and address barriers to attendance.

DCPS' e

Introduction

In compliance with Section 3803(i) of the District of Columbia Code, DC Public Schools (DCPS) pleased to report a summary of the District's truancy data for School Year 201

- x Focusing on 100% attendance entry. Ensuring that attendance taking policies are clear and backend systems support a 100% accurate attendance entry every day. This includes clarifying and communicating our attendance entry expectations and daily monitoring of schools who do not enter attendance each day.

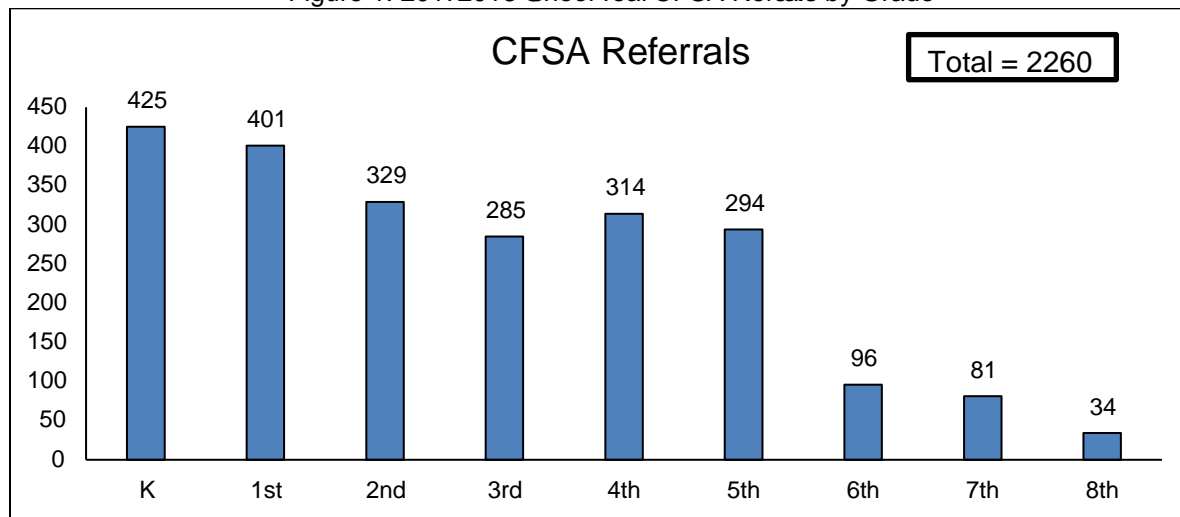
Unexcused Absences for Minors

Referrals to Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)

In SY17-18, 2,260 of the 2,780 eligible students (81%) were referred to CFSA for educational neglect. In SY16-17, 1,573 of the 1,990 eligible students (80%) were referred to CFSA for educational neglect. The increased referral rates over the last few years represents DCPS steady improvement in compliance. To further encourage improved compliance, DCPS simplified its training for school staff and increased its emphasis on this requirement. DCPS also instituted weekly monitoring and support from the DCPS Central Office Attendance Team. DCPS continues to strive for 100% compliance in this area. Additionally, it should be noted that based on a change in the law which became effective for SY17-18, only students with 10 full day absences are required to be referred to CFSA.⁰

The table below illustrates the distribution of referrals to CFSA across grade levels. The largest number of referrals were for Kindergarten students. Kindergarten marks the first full year of compulsory school attendance. DCPS recognizes that some families struggle with daycare options and the understanding of the legal shift for compulsory attendance requirements. DCPS recognizes that early intervention and instilling good habits of regular school attendance in early grades is critical to preventing truancy. Accordingly, DCPS continues to refine and increase its communication to parents and families about the importance of good attendance habits and the development of crucial skills for students in the early grades, coupled with providing information as to the disadvantages and academic challenges created by chronic absenteeism.

Figure 1: 2017-2018 School Year CFSA Referrals by Grade¹



⁸ These CFSA numbers are reflective of any student throughout the course of the year (inclusive of students who are no longer enrolled in DCPS) who met criteria for requiring a CFSA referral, and subsequently received one. An additional 676 discretionary CFSA referrals were made for students who did not meet the attendance criteria.

⁹ Students between the ages 5 - 13 who were referred accumulated 10 or more all day unexcused absences. 1,573 reflects referrals made for currently enrolled compulsory aged students. There were 2,342 actual referrals made, some of which were duplicative and others which were for students who subsequently withdrew or were over the required age.

¹⁰ D.C. Official Code § 38208 c (1)(A) was amended by D.C. Law 2140, School Attendance Clarification Amendment Act of 2016.

¹¹ 9th graders received less than 10 CFSA referrals and are therefore excluded from this chart.

Referrals to the Judicial System

In SY1718, DCPS referred 797 of 2,318 eligible students (34%) to the judicial system (including DC Superior Court Social Services and the Office of the Attorney General). In SY1617, DCPS referred 839¹³ of 1,820 eligible students (46%) to the judicial system. Although the referral rate for this year has dipped, the compliance rate for court referrals has increased over the course of the previous few school years. It should be noted that the same staff are responsible for coordinating all facets of attendance work which may be part of the root cause for a dip in the referral rate.

Additionally, schools continue to struggle to provide the extensive proof required that each of the attendance protocol steps were completed before a court referral could be made. For example, with copies of 3, 5, 7, and 15 day letters mailed to a family, CFSA referral, attendance records, special education or Section 504 records; evidence of intervention services and copies of referral to outside resources as well as SST plans and social history narrative. As noted above, a change in the law became effective for SY1617. This change required that only students with 15 full day absences be referred.¹⁵

The table below illustrates the distribution of referrals to court for SY1718. The largest number of referrals was made to address absences at the kindergarten, fourth and ninth grade levels.

Valid Reasons for Absence

Lawful reasons for absence are defined in DCPSSY1718 Attendance Guide and follow DCMR Title 5 Chapter 21. The following absences are excused:

- x Illness of the student or a bona fide medical reason (a doctor's note is required if a student is absent for five or more consecutive days);
- x Medical or dental appointment for the student;
- x Death in the student's immediate family;
- x Exclusion due to quarantine, contagious disease, etc.;
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Strategies for Improvement

Strategies for Improvement in SY17-18

In SY17-18, DCPS worked diligently to improve data integrity, messaging, and systems to better position schools to combat chronic absenteeism. DCPS also implemented a series of research-based initiatives to provide differentiated supports to school and students. Highlights are summarized below:

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Additionally, during the 2017-2018 school year, DCPS encouraged school leaders to develop a multi-tiered system to reduce chronic absenteeism in their schools, with special emphasis on universal strategies, which are utilized to support consistent daily attendance for all students. Tier 2 of the system

Strategies for Improvement in SY18-19

DCPS recognized a need to shift mindsets for families and staff and increase accountability beyond our district wide strategy. Using SY17-18 as a baseline, DCPS developed a new vision for attendance: that every student is welcomed and encouraged to attend school by every adult every day. This vision is supported by three critical pillars that guide DCPS' implementation of attendance initiatives:

- x Ensuring systems integrity and actionable data. We believe that our compliance system and support structures must operate seamlessly. We believe that in order for data to be actionable, it must be accurate, accessible, and reviewed regularly.
- x Providing clear information on policies, practices, and procedures. We believe families and students must be empowered with information to understand the impact of every day on a student's life. We also are committed to clarifying policies and training school staff on attendance requirements and best practices.
- x Strengthening partnerships. We believe that proactively engaging and supporting all of our stakeholders will allow us to effectively address attendance issues.

touchpoints with students and families of students who have a history of attendance concerns. This fall, DCPS is using the data to drive targeted outreach and closely monitor the attendance and academic progress of these students to more readily determine if support is needed.

For example, DCPS is beginning the year with a targeted home mailing to families of students with high absences (36+) in School Year 2018. Types of letters (elementary and secondary versions of each) are being mailed as follows:

- x Students with 36 or fewer absences goal of cutting absences in half.
- x Extended School Year students with over 36 absences goal of 20 absences or fewer (10% of EY days)
- x Traditional School Year students with over 36 absences goal of 18 absences or fewer (10% of TY days)

If students met the above goals, they would not be chronically absent in School Year 2018.

All schools will be required to execute the attendance strategies outlined in the Comprehensive School Plans developed over the summer. As part of this process, schools will be required to continue truancy compliance work and execute the specific strategies they have identified to address chronic absenteeism. For example, schools will select a specific cohort of students for which intensive supports will be implemented to abate attendance barriers, including but not limited to: phone banking, parent engagement sessions, home visits and incentive programs, all ultimately intended to reduce chronic absenteeism.

DCPS believes that a citywide approach is needed to address school attendance. DCPS is working to expand its use of community volunteers, nonprofits and business leaders to support segments of attendance efforts. Principals, as well as school and Office attendance staff (Office of Family Public Engagement (OFPE) and others) will play an important role in recruiting, engaging and coordinating community partners. We plan to leverage OFPE's expertise to enhance our existing partnership base and expand our partner portfolio. Additionally, DCPS is meeting with existing partners (Show Up/Stand Out, Roving Leaders, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Behavioral Health, Community in Schools, City Year, and Flamboyan) to determine the best way to increase collaboration and effectiveness of these partnerships. Volunteer mentors will be recruited to help encourage and empower students, offer tutoring and provide other needed supports. We will solicit businesses to donate prizes for incentives, and to provide their employees as volunteers.

Additionally, DCPS is coordinating with Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) to create a more robust district-wide attendance messaging campaign to engage youth appropriately and to encourage celebrities and athletes, along with nonprofit organizations to join us in conveying the message that "every day counts."

This year, in collaboration with the Deputy Mayor for Education, DCPS assistant principals will have the opportunity to participate in the DC Schools Community of Practice: Trauma-Informed Practices, to learn and grow together for the benefit of the current and future children they serve.

DCPS will continue to partner with the DME and the Every Day Counts Taskforce to improve attendance and reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism rates. Collaboration will focus on new work in SY18 in the key partnership areas identified by the Every Day Counts! Task Force, including safe passage, transportation for homeless youth, and family engagement. DCPS will be working to ensure these

Appendix A: Disaggregated Data

Note, school level data has been included in this appendix. School by grade level is suppressed in all tables to protect student privacy based on the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Figure 1: Unexcused Absences Counting Toward Truancy by Grade

SchoolName	Enrollment (TruantEligible)	# 1-5 Absences	# 6-10 Absences	# 11-20 Absences	# 21+ Absences
Aiton ES	190	74	58	33	12

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SchoolName	Enrollment (TruantEligible)	# 1-5 Absences	# 6-10 Absences	# 11-20 Absences	# 21+ Absences
Garrison ES	192	130	30	<10	<10
H.D. Cooke ES	337	163	64	47	19
Hardy MS	405	282	16	<10	<10
Hart MS	392	173	121	47	29
Hearst ES	278	183	24	<10	0
Hendley ES	387	82	108	115	75
Houston ES	227	92	64	47	20
HydeAddison ES	272	172	43	<10	0
Inspiring Youth Program	30	<10	<10	0	0
J.O. Wilson ES	421	180	120	71	23
Janney ES	680	506	24	<10	0
Jefferson MS Academy	336	115	91	65	49
Johnson MS	293	74	92	76	48
Kelly Miller MS	470	152	104	125	75
Ketcham ES	269	67	88	90	20
Key ES	386	259	32	<10	0

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SchoolName	Enrollment (TruantEligible)	# 1-5 Absences	# 6-10 Absences	# 11-20 Absences	# 21+ Absences
Payne ES	283	91	90	62	27

Figure 2 SST, CFSA, and Court Referrals -

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School Name	Referral Type	Required	Required & Referred	Compliance Rate
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School Name

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School Name	Referral Type	Required	Required & Referred	Compliance Rate
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Annual Truancy Report for SY-18

School Name	Referral Type	Required
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