

Improving attendance rates is a major concern in schools

By Education Week, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.17.18

Word Count **439**

Level **590L**



A student gets on a bus to leave school. Photo by: Rogelio V. Solis/AP Photo

Many students miss too many days of school. Schools are trying to fix this problem.

About 1 in 7 students miss too much school. These students missed 15 or more school days. Attendance Works and the Everyone Graduates Center work on increasing student attendance. They made a report.

They studied information from the 2015-2016 school year. Almost 8 million students miss too much school. More than half were in schools that had many kids missing too much school.

Hedy Chang is the leader of Attendance Works. Chang says that students need more help.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is a law. All states in the United States have to follow it. It says schools have to list how many students missed school.

Looking Beyond Grades

States need to make sure their students are succeeding. Under the new law, they have to look at more than grades. Schools have to get better. Many states found out how many students missed too much school.

Some states decided the number of days students could miss. Others decided students should not miss more than 10 percent of days.

Chang said that many people did not know that this was a problem.

The report counts school days missed for any reason. This includes being out sick. It also includes being out because of a suspension.

Schools may start trying to help students. They may change punishments. They might also try to get students to like class more. Schools will also look at things that keep students out of school.

"Golly, Look Who's Calling To Wake Me Up"

Some schools made advertisements. Famous people recorded wake-up calls. Students got calls to come to school.

Some groups say schools cannot fix so many problems. They say these problems are outside of school.

Some groups are worried that schools might lie. They do not want to get into trouble.

Some schools have more low-income students. Those schools usually had more absences.

At some schools 3 out of 4 students were low-income. At these schools just under 1 out of 4 students were not in school 30 percent of the school year. If a school year is 36 weeks, that means a student misses 10 weeks of school. This is a lot of missed school days.

This was not the case in schools where there were less low-income students.

Racial Differences In Absences

Students of color miss school more than white students.

Robert Balfanz is the leader of the Everyone Graduates Center. He says that these problems are not impossible to fix.

Balfanz says some schools are getting better.

Chang said schools should learn to fix the problem.

Quiz

1 A main idea of the article is that many schools are having attendance problems.

Which key detail from the article supports this main idea?

- (A) About 1 in 7 students miss too much school. These students missed 15 or more school days.
- (B) The Every Student Succeeds Act is a law. All states in the United States have to follow it.
- (C) The report counts school days missed for any reason. This includes being out sick.
- (D) Robert Balfanz is the leader of the Everyone Graduates Center. He says that these problems are not impossible to fix.

2 Read the paragraph from the section "Golly, Look Who's Calling To Wake Me Up."

At some schools 3 out of 4 students were low-income. At these schools just under 1 out of 4 students were not in school 30 percent of the school year. If a school year is 36 weeks, that means a student misses 10 weeks of school. This is a lot of missed school days.

What is the main idea of the paragraph?

- (A) Students who miss 30 percent of the school year are missing about 10 weeks of school.
- (B) Schools with fewer low-income students do not have many problems with absences.
- (C) Students can miss school because they are sick or because they were suspended.
- (D) Schools with many low-income students usually have more absences.

3 Why did famous people record wake-up calls?

- (A) to thank kids for going to school
- (B) to help kids get better grades
- (C) to fix problems outside of school
- (D) to encourage kids to go to school

- 4 How did schools change because of the Every Student Succeeds Act?
- (A) They never had any more kids miss too many days of school.
 - (B) They started to have problems with kids missing too much school.
 - (C) They learned more about how many kids miss too much school.
 - (D) They saw that kids were not missing as much school as they thought.