

Chronic Absenteeism: A major barrier to learning

Essex County, New Jersey



Statewide, more than 125,000 NJ students are chronically absent each year. Regular attendance is essential to school success. Chronic absence—missing excessive amounts of school for any reason—can cause students to fall behind academically.

Students who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are less likely to read proficiently by the time they finish third grade.

Children with certain risk factors—including poverty, homelessness and chronic illness—are both more likely to be chronically absent and especially hard hit because they often lack the resources to make up for the lost opportunities to learn in the classroom. An important step in reducing chronic absence is to build awareness and help understand what it is, how it affects students and identify ways to ensure children attend school. The chart below shows school districts with a chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher in Essex County during the 2013-2014 school year.



School Districts with 10 Percent or More of their Students Chronically Absent (2013-14)

School District	Percentage of K-3rd Graders Chronically Absent	Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Chronically Absent	Percentage of Total K-12 Students Chronically Absent	Total # of K-12 Students Chronically Absent
Bloomfield Township	9	23	12	707
City Of Orange Township	9	35	13	601
East Orange	23	69	33	2,947
Essex Co Voc-Tech	n/a	13	11	252
Irvington Township	20	17	20	1,228
Newark City*	29	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable
People's Preparatory Charter School**	n/a	15	20	53
Team Academy Charter School	11	56	18	392
Visions Academy Charter School	n/a	41	36	129
West Orange Town	6	30	11	783
TOTAL: 10 DISTRICTS				

*K-3rd grade data comes directly from Newark City School District. **The People's Preparatory Charter School does not have 12th grade. Note: N/A means that the school district does not serve children in those grades. Source: New Jersey Department of Education

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