

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
Members of the Accountability and Implementation Board

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools 

DATE: January 28, 2025

SUBJECT: Aligned Metrics Update

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on one of the Aligned Metrics targets, specifically current data on chronic absenteeism and the supports being provided to local education agencies (LEAs).

Executive Summary

Since March 2024, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) staff have met frequently to identify proposed targets based on the identified alignment of metrics across three state education plans: the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) and MSDE's Strategic Plan, the AIB's Blueprint Comprehensive Plan, and Governor Wes Moore's Moore-Miller Administration State Plan. An initial set of metrics with baseline data and three-year targets were presented to the MSBE and the AIB in June 2024.

Chronic absenteeism reports the percent of students at each school who are absent at least ten percent or more of school days, and in membership at the school at least ten days. A student is counted as absent if he or she is not physically on school grounds and is not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for the school day. Chronically absent students include students who are absent for any reason (e.g., illness, suspension, the need to care for a family member), regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused. Baseline data indicated a statewide rate of 30% in the 2022-23 school year and a three-year target of 15% was established.

Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.

Attachments

Aligned Metrics Update.pptx

Aligned Metrics Update.pdf

Aligned Metrics Update

January 28, 2025

Presented By |

Geoff Sanderson, Deputy State Superintendent, MSDE
Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, MSDE



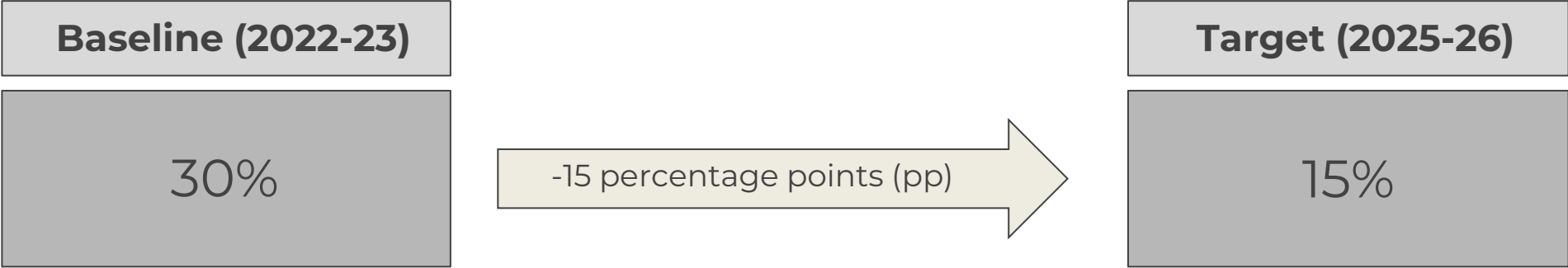


Presentation Outline

1. Chronic Absenteeism Target
2. Trends in Chronic Absences in Maryland
3. Addressing the Issue of Chronic Absences
4. Support for LEAs

Chronic Absenteeism

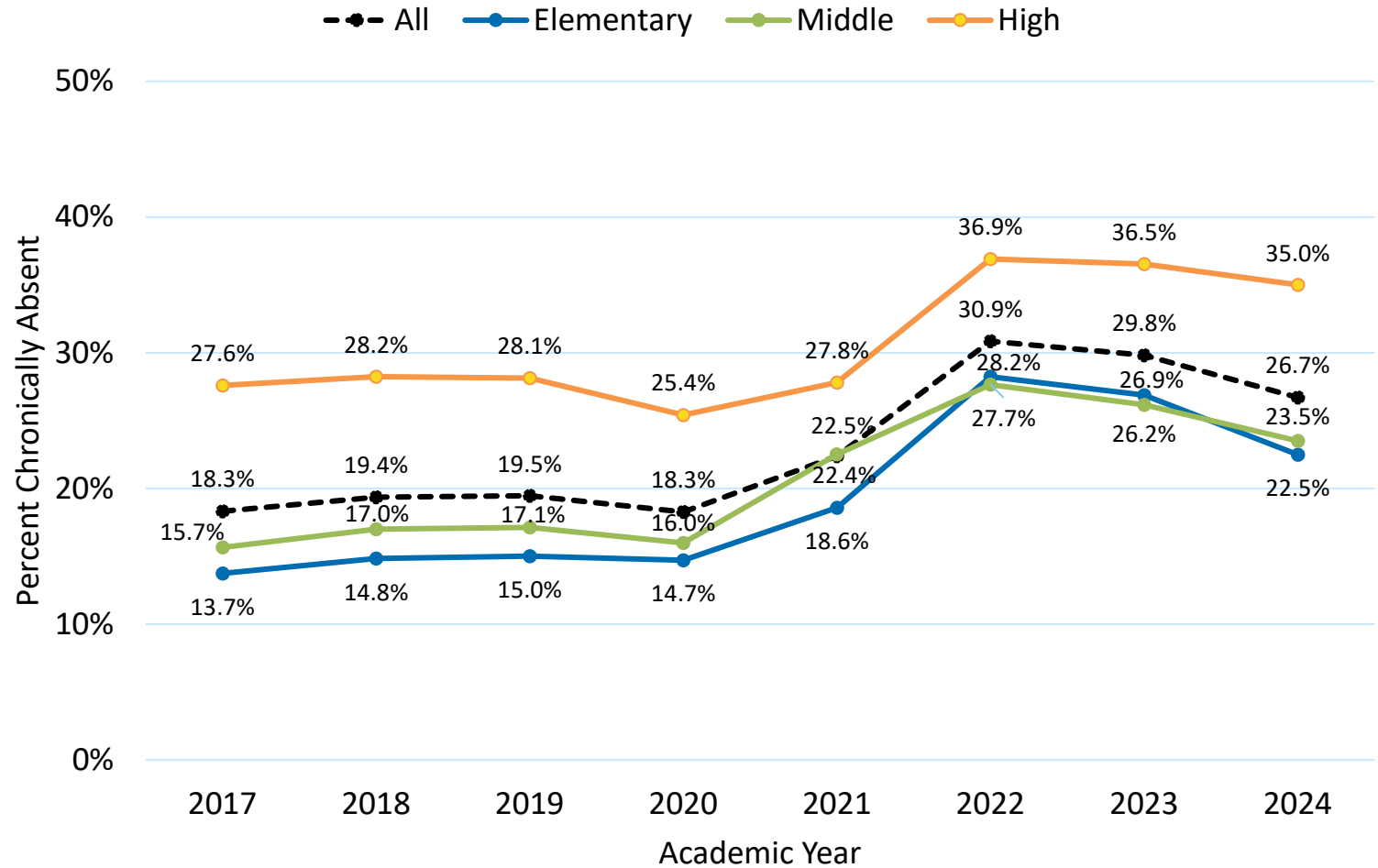
Rate of chronic absenteeism in all schools



State Trends in Chronic Absences

Chronic absences have gradually declined since 2022 but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Chronic absences at the high school level have seen less reductions since 2022 than at the elementary and middle school levels.

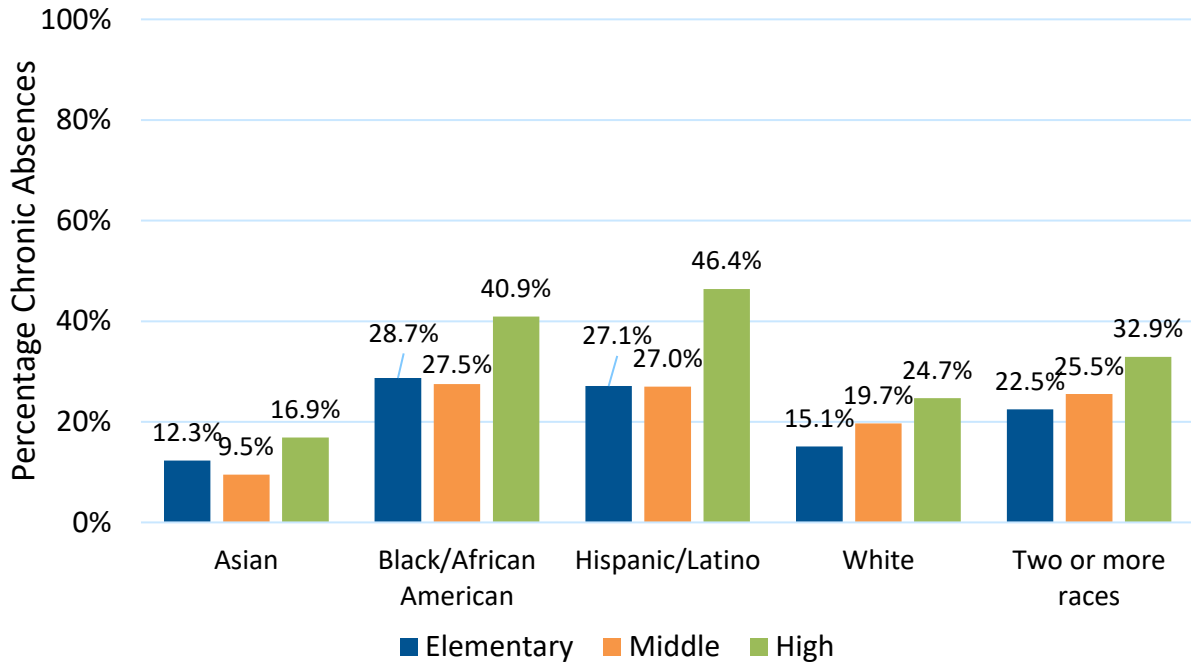


Note: The end of the 2020 and the majority of the 2021 academic years were largely virtual instruction in most Maryland LEAs. Grade spans are as follows: Elementary – grades K-5; Middle – grades 6-8; High – grades 9-12

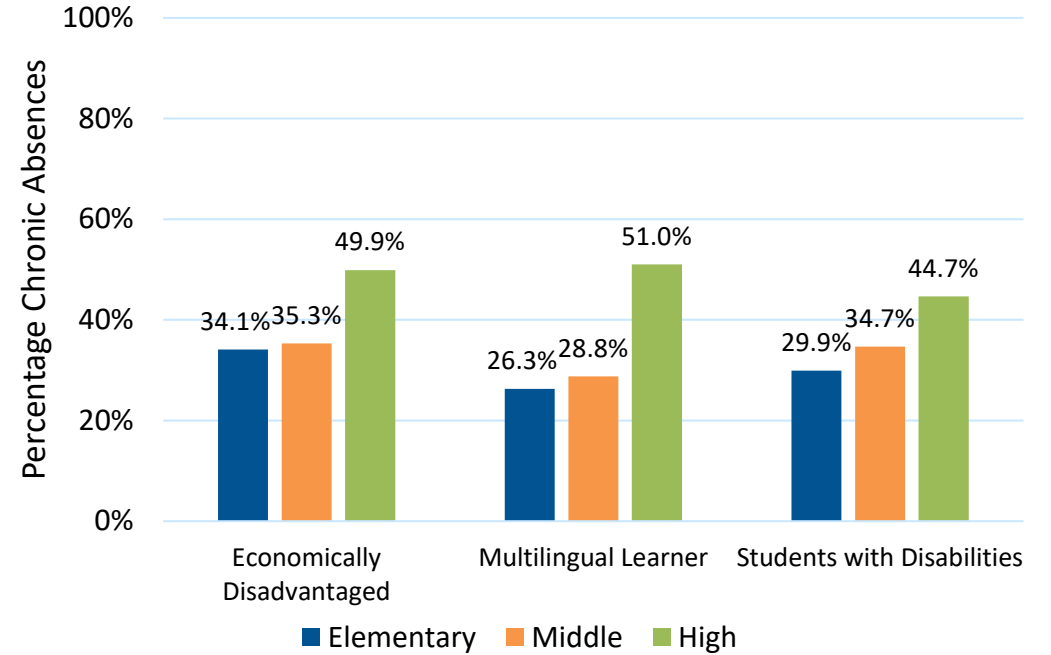
Chronic Absences by Student Group (SY 2023-2024)

Chronic absence rates in SY 2023-2024 were highest for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and students in special service groups.

Race/Ethnicity



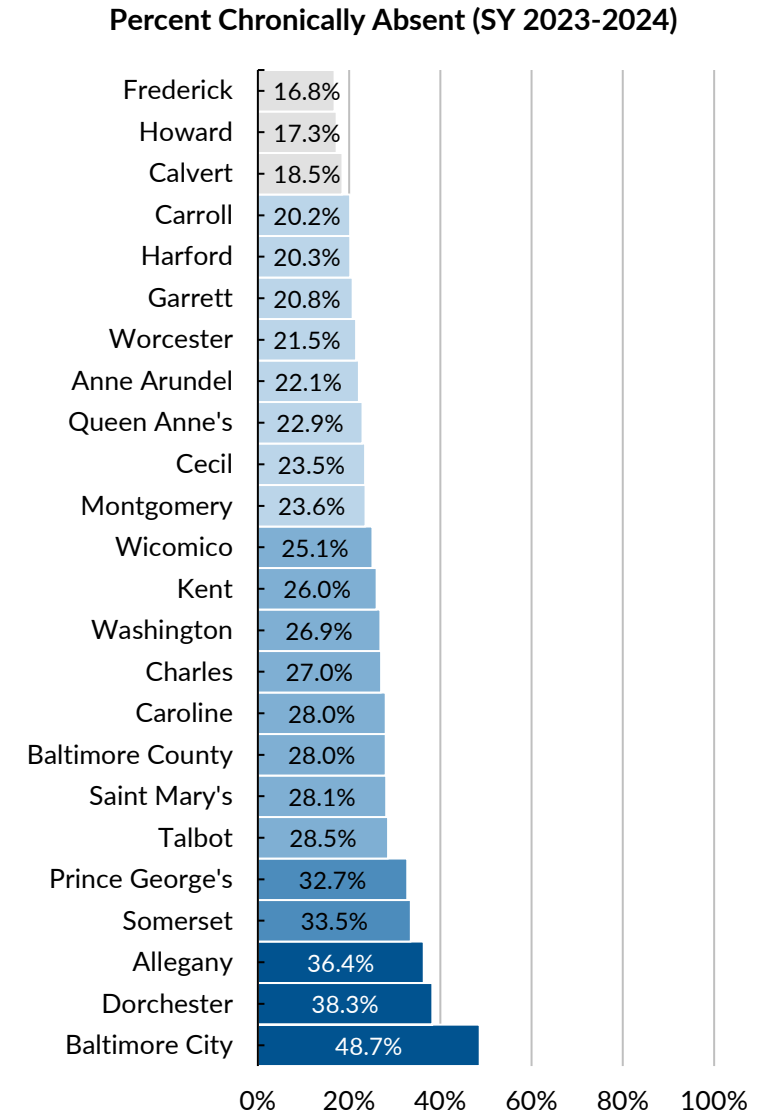
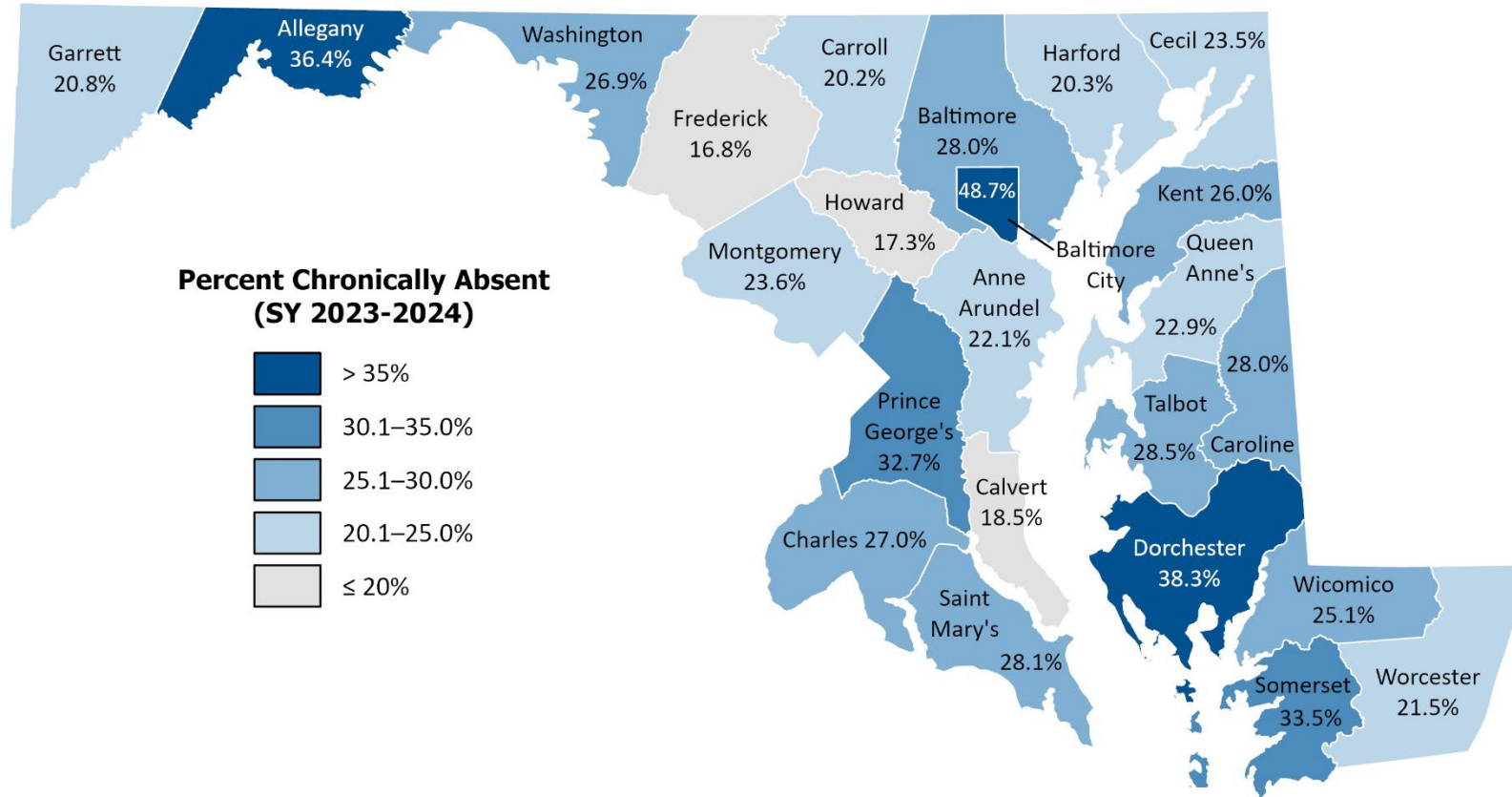
Student Groups



Grade spans are as follows: Elementary – grades K-5; Middle – grades 6-8; High – grades 9-12

Chronic Absences by LEA in 2024

Chronic absence rates varied from 17% to 49% in SY 2023-2024.



Addressing the Issue of Chronic Absences

The Problem: Chronic absences are a significant barrier to student success. When students miss 10% or more school days, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused, they miss out on valuable instructional time. Chronic absences negatively impact students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and long-term success. The effects of absences are particularly pronounced in early grades, where missing school leads to long-term learning deficits and a higher risk of academic failure.

In Maryland, chronic absence rates are of concern. In particular, students from specific demographic groups- such as students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and economically disadvantaged students- are disproportionately affected. This presents a critical challenge for educators, families, and communities.

Addressing the Issue of Chronic Absences

MSDE's Response: In response to this growing issue, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recognized the need for a coordinated, strategic approach to tackle chronic absences. MSDE is committed to addressing chronic absences by providing local education agencies (LEAs) with the tools, guidance, and resources needed to support students and families.

Addressing the Issue of Chronic Absences

The Solution: To effectively address chronic absences, MSDE established a task force made up of professionals representing various sectors within education, mental health, and community services. This diverse team brings a wealth of perspectives and expertise with a multifaceted approach to tackling chronic absences and improving student outcomes. The task force will:

- Bring together experts to identify and share successful strategies for reducing chronic absences.
- Create a comprehensive attendance guidance document that will provide actionable strategies for schools at all levels.
- Offer resources for both students and schools, from early intervention to intensive supports, to address the root causes of absences.

Attendance Task Force Membership

- Attendance Works
- Baltimore Teachers Union Representative
- Behavioral Health Coordinator
- Community School Coordinator
- Director of Student Services
- Free State Parent Representative
- Higher Education
- LEA Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
- Local School Superintendents (2)
- Maryland State Department of Education Staff
- Maryland State Education Association
- Parent's Place of Maryland
- Principal (Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals - MAESP)
- Principal (Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals - MASSP)
- School Counselor
- School Pupil Personnel Worker

Chronic Absences Support for LEAs

The Maryland State Department of Education is working to provide chronic absences support to improve student outcomes through:

- **Researching trends in statewide and local data** on attendance and school climate.
- **Reviewing school data** to identify schools that have lowered chronic absences and improved attendance and determining strategies that have contributed to their success.
- **Identifying and addressing how school climate may impact attendance** (example: impact of bullying behaviors, what contributes to school avoidance).
- **Collaborating with Attendance Works** (organization committed to reducing chronic absences).
- Developing a **statewide guidance attendance document** in collaboration with Attendance Works and local education agencies.
- A **virtual student support services conference** held in August 2024 focused on recognizing trends in statewide and local attendance and climate and identifying best practices.
- Utilizing the **Maryland School Mental Health Response Team** to provide support to school counselors and other student services personnel to address challenges with attendance.
- Identifying strategies that **Community Schools** are using to reduce chronic absences.

Partnership with Attendance Works

- State Attendance Guidance
- Attendance Toolkit (Phase I)
- State Attendance Toolkit (Phase II)
- Attendance Communication Plan
- Community of Practice
- Collaboration with other states