

AFTERSCHOOL COMBATS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM



Afterschool and summer learning programs can help combat chronic absenteeism by improving students' academic outcomes, behavior, and attendance rates.

WHAT IS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM?

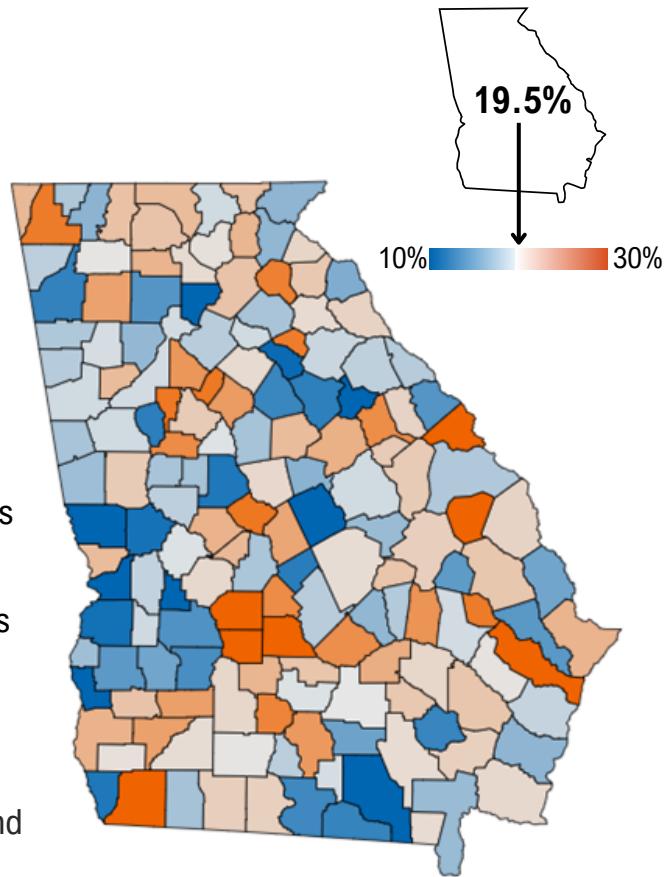
Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school days¹, is a growing challenge for Georgia's schools. Missing just two days a month amounts to missing about 10% of the school year, which can lead to serious academic setbacks.²

Who is chronically absent in Georgia?

In 2025:³

- **19.5%** of all Georgia students
- **22.8%** of economically disadvantaged students
- **24.4%** of students with disabilities
- **44.3%** of students experiencing homelessness

The root causes of chronic absenteeism include socio-economic and health barriers to attendance, aversion to school, disengagement from school, and misconceptions about the impact of absences.⁴



THE IMPACT OF MISSING TOO MUCH SCHOOL

Beyond the obvious - low academic achievement - chronic absence is linked to:^{5, 6}



Low literacy rates



Increased high school dropout rates



Socioemotional developmental delays

High levels of chronic absenteeism rates in classrooms and schools can also negatively impact students that do not experience absences themselves due to disruptions in teacher practices and classroom dynamics.⁷



HOW AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS CAN HELP

Youth regularly participating in high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs experience improved academic outcomes, better behavior, and higher attendance rates.⁸ These programs promote:⁹



School
Connectedness



Student Engagement
in Learning



Safety



Youth Voice
and Connection



Opportunities to Explore
Passions and Interests



Supportive Adults
and Mentors

The Impact of Georgia's 21st Century Community Learning Centers ¹⁰

- 76% of surveyed students demonstrated increased engagement in learning
- 68% of students with prior-year attendance rates at or below 90% in the prior school year demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year

RECOMMENDATIONS

State Agencies and Leadership

- Increase funding for the BOOST program to \$20 million to build on the state's annual investment in community-based out-of-school time programs.
- Increase investment in transportation and attendance incentive programs, especially in rural communities.
- Continue to fund and expand the Georgia Apex Program, a statewide comprehensive school-based behavioral health model funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
- Promote the integrated mental health and primary care model into school-based health centers.

School and District Leadership

- Offer affordable, school-based afterschool and summer learning programs by utilizing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funds, including Title I, Title II, and Title IV, Part A funds.
- Partner with afterschool and summer learning programs and share attendance data to leverage data-driven strategies to increase student engagement and attendance.
- Implement early, positive outreach strategies following initial student absences to strengthen relationships, identify barriers, and encourage consistent attendance.
- Utilize attendance data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of student engagement and support needs.

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