



Sept. 29, 2023

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Executive Directors,

I hope you are all doing well. I'd like to highlight the [statewide attendance rates we recently posted on our website](#) and provided to your staff who submit attendance data to CDE. I know we can all agree that every day a student is in school is an opportunity for them to learn, build relationships and access support. It's critical that we work together to continue to improve attendance rates, so I wanted to provide some state-level context for you.

Our rate of chronic absenteeism in Colorado is now at 31%. This means 269,582 students – more than one quarter of all students – missed more than 10% of school for either excused or unexcused absences. Although this is lower than the rate during the height of the pandemic, it is still higher than what we saw before the pandemic. Chronic absenteeism has been calculated since the 2016-17 school year, and rates ranged from 18% to 24% prior to the pandemic. In 2021-22, 36% of students missed 10% or more of school days – 5 percentage points more than last year.

I know that you and your educators are working hard to ensure students attend school regularly – more than 75% of districts saw improved attendance from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Thank you for all the work you have done to collaborate with students, families, and other community members to keep more students engaged in learning.

I believe we need everyone – including students, educators, parents, grandparents and other caregivers and community members – to make a renewed effort on getting our kids to school regularly. To help, we are planning a press release next week to highlight statewide absenteeism rates and raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.

I wanted to let you know about this data release in advance of sharing it more broadly. I also invite you to share any initiatives you've found to be especially effective in your district. We would love to highlight your promising practices as part of our statewide work to improve attendance. In addition, the CDE team is organizing several activities this year to highlight ways to increase attendance. If you'd like to share a promising practice, please reach out to [Johann Liliengren](#) in our Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement.





Office of the Commissioner
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

Please see additional information below and feel free to reach out to our staff with your ideas, promising practices, or any questions you may have.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Susana Córdova'.

Susana Córdova
Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education

