

# DIGITAL BACKPACK: RESOURCES TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IN YOUR COMMUNITY



In the 2020-2021 school year—the most recent year for which federal data is available—**14.7 million students nationwide were chronically absent**, nearly doubling pre-pandemic rates. Studies have shown that students who are chronically absent—missing more than fifteen days of school a year—face serious risk of falling farther behind. Encouragingly, we know that taking a data-driven, comprehensive approach that engages students and their families can help solve this problem.

The Partnership for Student Success at the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center has curated a dynamic digital backpack of resources to support schools and districts in addressing chronic absence challenges in their communities. By detailing key considerations on how to identify and implement evidence-based supports and offering links to high-quality resources, this digital backpack sets up districts, schools, and partners for more effective execution, ultimately increasing outcomes for students.

## **Building a Plan to Address Chronic Absenteeism in Your Community:**

As first steps to addressing chronic absence challenges in your school, district, or community, you should consider the following when developing your plan.



*This digital backpack was curated by the Partnership for Student Success at the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center.*

## KNOW YOUR CHALLENGE:

The drivers of absenteeism are multi-dimensional and require different strategies to address effectively. Factors impacting attendance include:

- Barriers keeping students out of school.
- Avoidance of something at or in transit to school.
- Disengagement/not seeing connection between attendance and important outcomes.
- Operating on incomplete information about extent of absences or its impact.

To craft an effective approach to address chronic absenteeism, schools and districts need to engage their community to better understand the underlying issues. [The resources included in the linked document offer guidance.](#)

## ORGANIZE YOUR RESPONSE:

Combine prevention, problem-solving, and mitigation strategies to address the challenges you identified holistically:

- **Preventing** absenteeism where we can.
- **Solving** problem that are causing absenteeism.
- Find ways to **mitigate** negative impacts.

[Explore additional resources in linked folder.](#)

## GATHER EXISTING RESOURCES:

Look for ways to leverage existing school- and district-wide initiatives to advance attendance strategies. Integrate your plan into ongoing family engagement initiatives, community schools, school improvement plans, and school-based health services while forming strategic partnerships to maximize and sustain your efforts. [Explore additional resources linked here.](#)

## EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

Spotlights with information on how districts have worked to address chronic absence in their communities [can be found on the Partnership for Student Success website.](#)

*Have a toolkit, template, protocol, example, or other resource to help districts address chronic absenteeism that you would like added in the digital backpack? [Submit it for consideration by the PSS here.](#)*