

Chronic Absenteeism in Hartford Public Schools

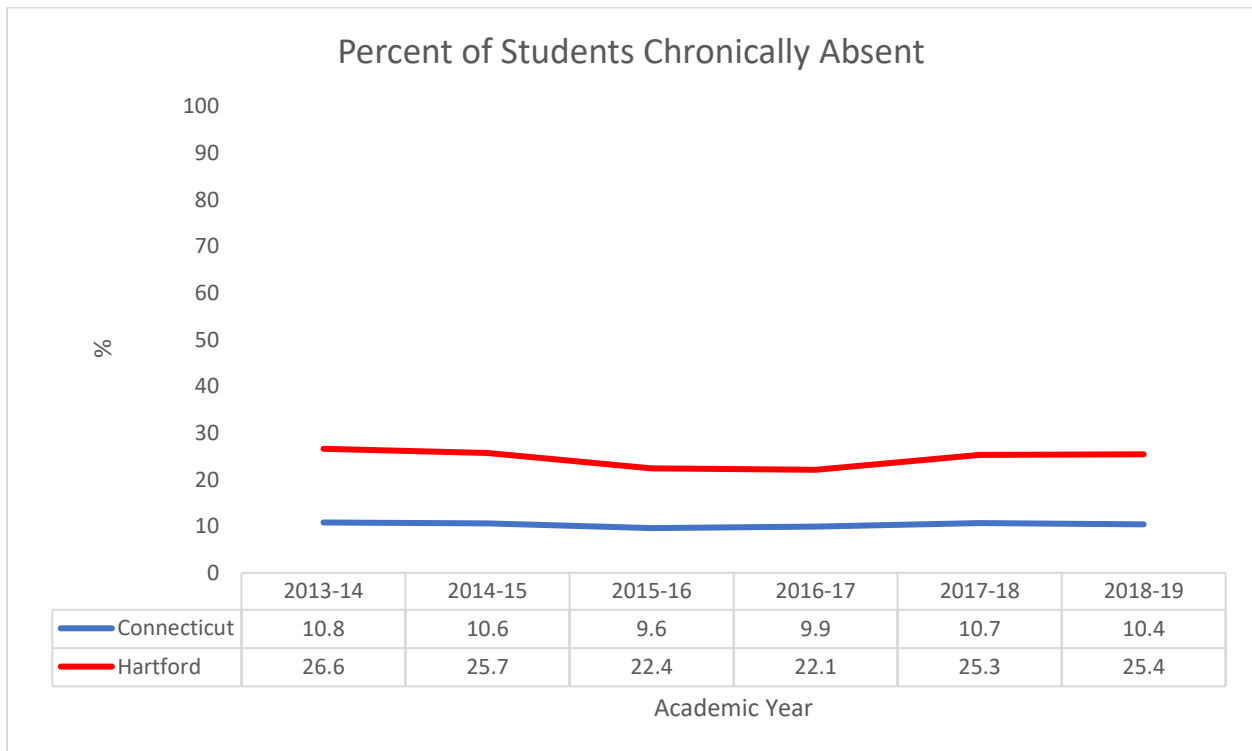
Background

A student is defined as chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of school days in a given year. This report uses chronic absenteeism data for students in the Hartford Public Schools (HPS), available from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), through <http://edsight.ct.gov>. Note that unless otherwise specified, the data reflects chronic absenteeism for Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The Data

Overall Rates in Hartford and Connecticut

The chronic absenteeism rate for the state has been holding steady in the realm of 10% for several years. The rate for Hartford Public Schools has fluctuated a bit more over the same period but has averaged approximately 25%. This means that consistently, the chronic absenteeism rate in Hartford is around 2.5 times as high as the overall rate for the state of Connecticut.



Put simply, this is an incredibly high rate of chronic absenteeism. The rest of this report will examine the problem in more detail.

Chronic Absenteeism Across the State

At Achieve Hartford, we have a standard set of 13 districts we like to use for these comparisons.

West Hartford, Farmington, Glastonbury, and Achievement First Hartford Academy have consistently lower rates of chronic absenteeism than the state at large. Stamford and East Hartford are both somewhat worse but both experience a lot of fluctuation. CREC seemed similar until recently, but their fluctuation is starting to look like a steady trend toward higher chronic absenteeism, putting them in the company of New Haven, Bridgeport, and Manchester. Jumoke Academy had an unusually bad year in 2018-19, but otherwise usually does well.

Hartford and New Britain stand out as having extremely high rates of chronic absenteeism. Hartford has been fairly consistent in this regard, but the rate in New Britain seems to be steadily catching up.

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Hartford School District	26.6	25.7	22.4	22.1	25.3	25.4
New Britain School District	19.2	20.7	18.0	20.1	22.2	24.2
New Haven School District	24.7	25.6	19.9	18.3	19.9	19.3
Bridgeport School District	21.2	19.0	17.4	18.3	19.3	18.8
Capitol Region Education Council	13.7	15.0	11.6	14.0	16.1	18.6
Jumoke Academy District	6.2	7.9	6.3	14.0	10.1	18.0
Manchester School District	12.4	13.3	14.4	16.9	19.2	17.8
Waterbury School District	20.6	18.6	16.2	16.0	18.2	15.6
East Hartford School District	12.9	16.1	12.9	14.0	16.4	14.2
Stamford School District	10.0	13.9	11.7	8.9	10.7	11.1
Connecticut	10.8	10.6	9.6	9.9	10.7	10.4
West Hartford School District	5.1	5.3	5.3	6.2	6.2	6.7
Achievement First Hartford Academy Inc. District	6.1	10.6	10.1	9.1	6.5	6.5
Farmington School District	6.4	5.8	4.5	4.5	4.9	5.4
Glastonbury School District	2.8	3.0	2.7	3.3	3.1	3.7

Hartford has the 5th highest rate of chronic absenteeism out of all districts in the state, and New Britain is 6th. Every other district with a rate above 20% is either a special district or a charter high school legally defined as a district (see Appendix A for more).

Among traditional public school districts, Hartford Public Schools is consistently #1 in chronic absenteeism. Let's take a closer look at why.

Chronic Absenteeism in High School

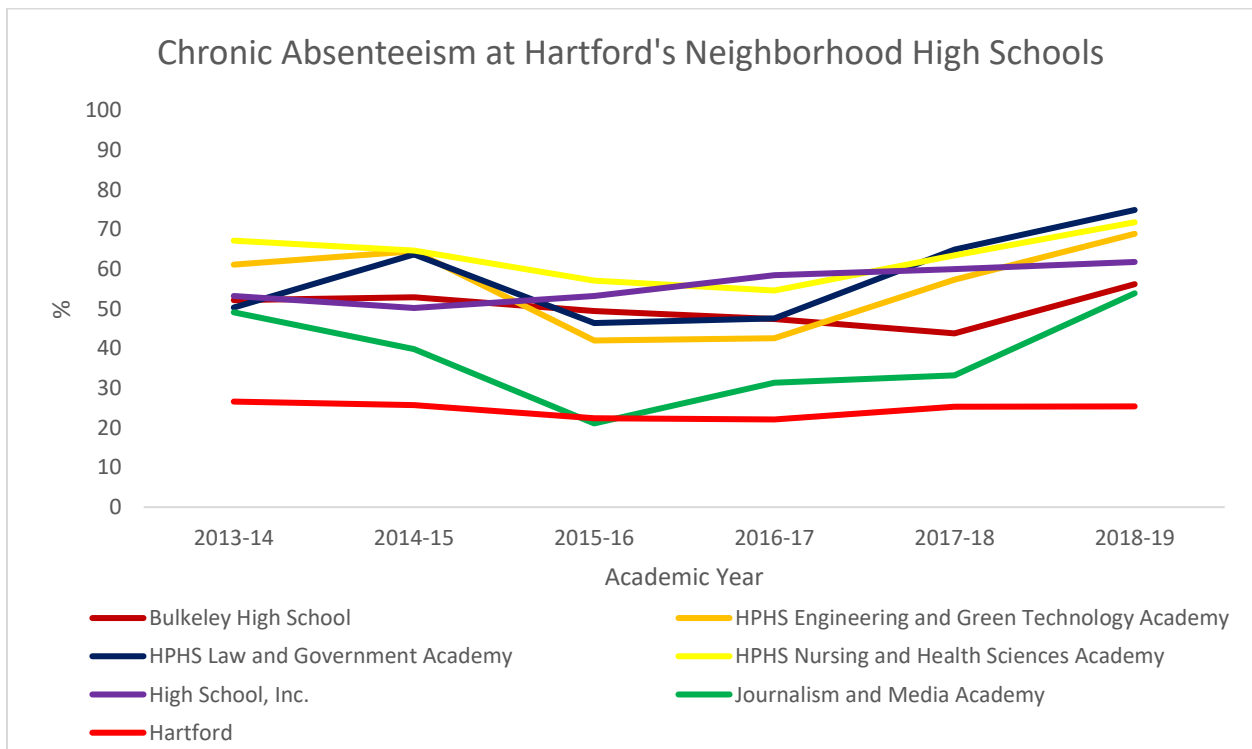
Statewide, chronic absenteeism rates are consistently much higher among high school students, as you can see in the table below:

Chronic Absenteeism Rates in Connecticut by Grade						
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Average	10.8	10.6	9.6	9.9	10.7	10.4
Grade 9	14.2	13.7	12.9	12.6	13.4	13.1
Grade 10	13.7	14.3	13.3	13.3	14.1	13.3
Grade 11	14.8	14.5	14.1	14.3	14.7	13.5
Grade 12	19.5	18.4	17.8	18.0	19.4	18.0

This points us towards the key source of Hartford’s chronic absenteeism problem: the high schools. The problem is, of course, everywhere; the chronic absenteeism rate in Hartford is over 20% in Kindergarten, consistently in the high teens from Grades 1—7, and breaks 20% again in 8th Grade.

But once students transition to high school, the rate immediately jumps above 30% and stays there. And that’s taking all of the HPS high schools into account, which obscures the real problem. None of the HPS magnet high schools have 30%+ chronic absenteeism rates; the highest, Pathways Academy, has a chronic absenteeism rate of 20%.

In the 2018-19 school year, the six neighborhood high schools all had rates over 50%.





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Conclusions

The rates of chronic absenteeism at the six neighborhood high schools are not just high; they are the highest rates in a district which has among the highest rates in the state. More than half of their students were chronically absent during the 2018-19 school year. Many of our other schools are doing poorly, but these six high schools are the driving force of our exceptionally high rate of chronic absenteeism.

It is on those schools that resources must be focused to solve this problem.

APPENDIX A: Chronic Absenteeism in Connecticut

Below are the 15 districts in Connecticut with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism. All 15 of these districts had a chronic absenteeism rate of at least 18% for the 2018-19 school year. None of the districts on this list appear to be improving on this over time, with the possible exception of New Haven.

As indicated in the main text above, most of these districts are either special districts or charter high schools. The traditional public school districts included here are Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Bridgeport.

% Chronic Absenteeism by District						
District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Stamford Academy District	*	86.9	99.3	97.5	80.4	73.3
EdAdvance	58.3	65.4	*	61.9	44.0	56.8
Eastern Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (EASTCONN)	13.4	32.3	33.9	34.3	35.8	31.9
Explorations District	29.1	28.4	30.6	28.8	37.5	29.4
Hartford School District	26.6	25.7	22.4	22.1	25.3	25.4
New Britain School District	19.2	20.7	18.0	20.1	22.2	24.2
Area Cooperative Educational Services	21.7	20.6	18.2	19.3	22.8	23.5
Great Oaks Charter School District	N/A	21.1	15.1	11.0	18.0	23.4
Unified School District #2	*	3.3	9.1	11.4	*	21.8
New Haven School District	24.7	25.6	19.9	18.3	19.9	19.3
Bridgeport School District	21.2	19	17.4	18.3	19.3	18.8
Cooperative Educational Services	15.8	18.9	16.4	19.7	21.0	18.6
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	13.7	15.0	11.6	14.0	16.1	18.6
Norwich Free Academy District	31.0	15.2	10.9	14.7	16.8	18.2
Jumoke Academy District	6.2	7.9	6.3	14.0	10.1	18.0
N/A means data was not available						
* means data was suppressed for privacy reasons						

APPENDIX B: Chronic Absenteeism in Hartford Public School District

% Chronic Absenteeism in HPS Schools, Ranked from Highest to Lowest (by 2018-19 data)						
School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
HPHS Law and Government Academy	50.3	63.7	46.4	47.6	64.9	74.9
HPHS Nursing and Health Sciences Academy	67.2	64.7	57.1	54.6	63.5	71.8
HPHS Engineering and Green Technology Academy	61.1	64.5	42	42.6	57.3	68.9
High School, Inc.	53.2	50.2	53.2	58.5	60	61.8
Bulkeley High School	52.2	52.9	49.4	47.4	43.8	56.2
Journalism and Media Academy	49.1	39.8	21.1	31.4	33.2	53.9
Burns Latino Studies Academy	32.1	34.6	34.1	25.4	28	38
Milner School	40.9	38.7	26.4	26.5	38	37.3
Wish Museum School	26.4	26.9	25.7	34.9	33.5	36.8
Bellizzi School	28.2	40.3	34.9	38	36.4	30.5
M. D. Fox School	35.4	30.6	19.8	23.5	22.3	26.8
McDonough Middle School	38.2	23.2	21.4	28.4	25.5	25.4
Global Communications Academy	17.6	8.4	12.1	15.8	24.8	24.1
Burr School	27.4	25.2	23	19.1	28.7	22.2
SAND School	47.5	40	26.4	17.5	29.4	21.7
Rawson School	20.4	22.6	18.4	13	17.1	21.6
Pathways Academy of Technology and Design	16.2	19.2	21.3	18.7	17.6	20.4
Sanchez School	27.1	22.5	16.9	17.6	16.9	19.8
Sport and Medical Sciences Academy	19.7	15.4	15.3	16.2	18.7	19.8
M. L. King, Jr. Middle School	25.9	26.3	24.6	20	31	19.5
Parkville Community School	26.2	20	24.2	14.5	17.5	18.2
West Middle School	26.1	20.5	22.9	18.6	19.2	18
Betances Early Reading Lab Magnet School	36.1	15.7	16.7	18.4	17.1	17.7
Great Path Academy at MCC	12.3	10.9	10	12.5	13.2	17.7
Montessori Magnet at Batchelder School	9.3	12.8	*	9.6	10.7	17.5
Naylor/CCSU Leadership Academy	22.5	21.9	19.6	27.8	21.2	16.1
Classical Magnet School	4.6	7.7	7.9	9.4	17.9	15.7
Kennelly School	22.2	25.6	23.6	20.5	15	15.2
University High School of Science and Engineering	10.8	9.2	10.7	11.1	12.1	14.5
Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School	1.6	26.2	20.1	19.5	21.9	14.2
Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts	14.1	13.4	4.1	4.9	17.3	14



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Breakthrough Magnet School, North	*	9.7	9.1	9.5	14.4	12.1
Environmental Sciences Magnet at Hooker School	9.6	5.7	6.9	8	11.1	11.2
Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy	7.3	7.8	8.9	7.1	11.7	10.7
Betances STEM Magnet School	14.1	6.7	4.4	7.5	11.6	10.5
Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy	12.1	10.9	11.6	5.4	6.1	10.1
Breakthrough Magnet School, South	4.6	7.7	6.8	5.3	6.4	7
Webster Micro Society Magnet School	6.4	9.7	3.5	11	10.3	6.9
STEM Magnet at Fisher School	2.8	7.9	6.1	4.8	5.7	6
Capital Preparatory Magnet School	11.9	4.5	4.9	7.2	9.2	5.1
Montessori Magnet at Fisher School	6.5	10.7	7.1	10.7	7	5
<i>* indicates that data was suppressed for privacy</i>						
Magnet schools shaded						