



GEOGRAPHY, SCHOOL TYPE, AND HIGH STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN DETROIT

Detroit has the highest rate of chronic absenteeism of any major city in the U.S., with more than half of students missing 18 or more days (10% of the school year). Still, about one-fifth of the city's students between 2010-11 and 2017-18 can be classified as "high attenders." These students had an average attendance rate of 99%. Are there particular characteristics and conditions that set these high attendance students apart? This analysis of Detroit's student attendance is a first step toward identifying unique characteristics of students with high attendance rates, which can inform policies to support an increase in student attendance city-wide.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Detroit's high attenders missed an average of just 2 days a year and performed significantly better on ELA and math standardized tests than non-high attenders, even those missing an average of 9 days a year.
- Nearly 70% of Detroit's high attenders were enrolled in "high attendance schools," or the top third of schools by attendance rate. Just 8% of high attenders were enrolled in "low attendance schools."
- Most of Detroit's high attenders were enrolled in "commuter" charter schools downtown and in the Detroit Public Schools Community District's application- or exam-based schools, traveling farther on average than non-high attenders to enroll in school.
- High attenders lived throughout the city but were especially concentrated in Southwest, downtown, and in the center-north, as well as in the northwest and near the border of Hamtramck.
- Latinx, white or middle eastern/north African (MENA), and Asian high attenders lived closer to school on average than their non-high attendance peers, and went to "neighborhood" rather than "commuter" schools. In contrast, black high attenders lived farther on average from school than their non-high attendance peers and were more likely to attend "commuter" schools.

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