

## EDUCATION

# Data shows statewide, local school attendance up in 2022-23

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LANSING — Statewide school attendance and absenteeism rates improved in Michigan last year, but still haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels, according to new data from the Michigan Department of Education.

Student attendance data from the 2022-23 school year was released this month, showing improvements at the state level. Michigan's K-12 students had a 90.5 percent attendance rate last year, up from 88.8 percent in 2021-22.

The state's chronically absent rate also improved from 38.5 percent to 30.8 percent. Students are deemed chronically absent if they miss 10 percent or more of possible days during the scheduled school year.

During the 2018-19 school year, the last full year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state attendance rate was 93.1 percent and the chronically absent rate was 19.7 percent.

“As the pandemic waned, attendance rates improved, and chronic absenteeism declined significantly,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. “That said, we have a great deal of work still to do in our local schools on this important, multi-faceted issue.”

MiSchoolData shows how each public school district in the state fared. Each local district cleared 90 percent attendance in 2022-23.

Black River once again had the top attendance rate in the area at 95.41 percent, up slightly from 95.14 percent in 2021-22. The school's chronically absent rate improved from 9.1 percent to 7.2 percent in 2022-23.

Attendance was also up in Zeeland, which saw a boost from 92.33 percent to 94.03 percent. Fourteen percent of ZPS students were chronically absent, down from 23.8 percent the year

prior.

Hamilton saw a big jump in attendance rates last year, as the district improved from 84.69 percent to 93.4 percent. The percentage of chronically absent students dropped from 36.7 percent to 14.1 percent.

Students at Saugatuck attended school 92.86 percent of the time, up from 91.61 percent the year prior. Saugatuck's chronically absent rate also improved, going from 27.3 percent to 20.7 percent.

West Ottawa's attendance rate improved from 89.43 percent in 2021-22 to 91.06 percent last year. The district's chronically absent rate improved nearly 10 percentage points from 38 to 28.5 percent.

There was a slight attendance dip at Holland last year, although the district remained above state average. Attendance went from 91.3 percent to 90.96 percent. The district's chronically absent rate marginally improved from 28.8 percent to 28.7 percent.

Fennville also saw increased attendance last year, moving from 88.24 percent to 90.70 percent, above the state average. The rate of chronically absent students also improved, dropping from 40.7 percent to 33.5 percent.

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As a whole, students in districts within the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District had an attendance rate of 92.7 percent, with 21.5 percent of students chronically absent.

Students in the Allegan Area ESA had a 92.18 percent attendance rate with 24.8 percent of students chronically absent.

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