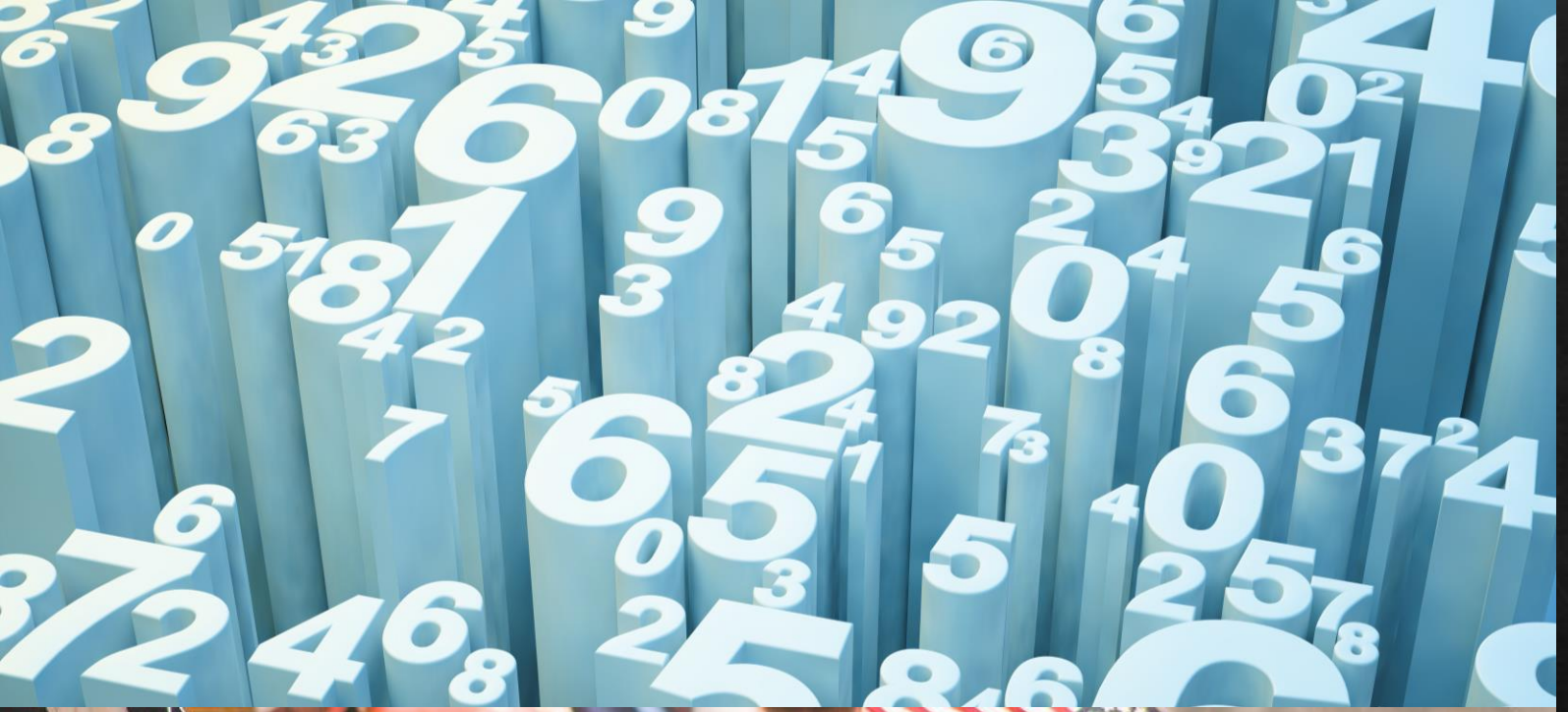

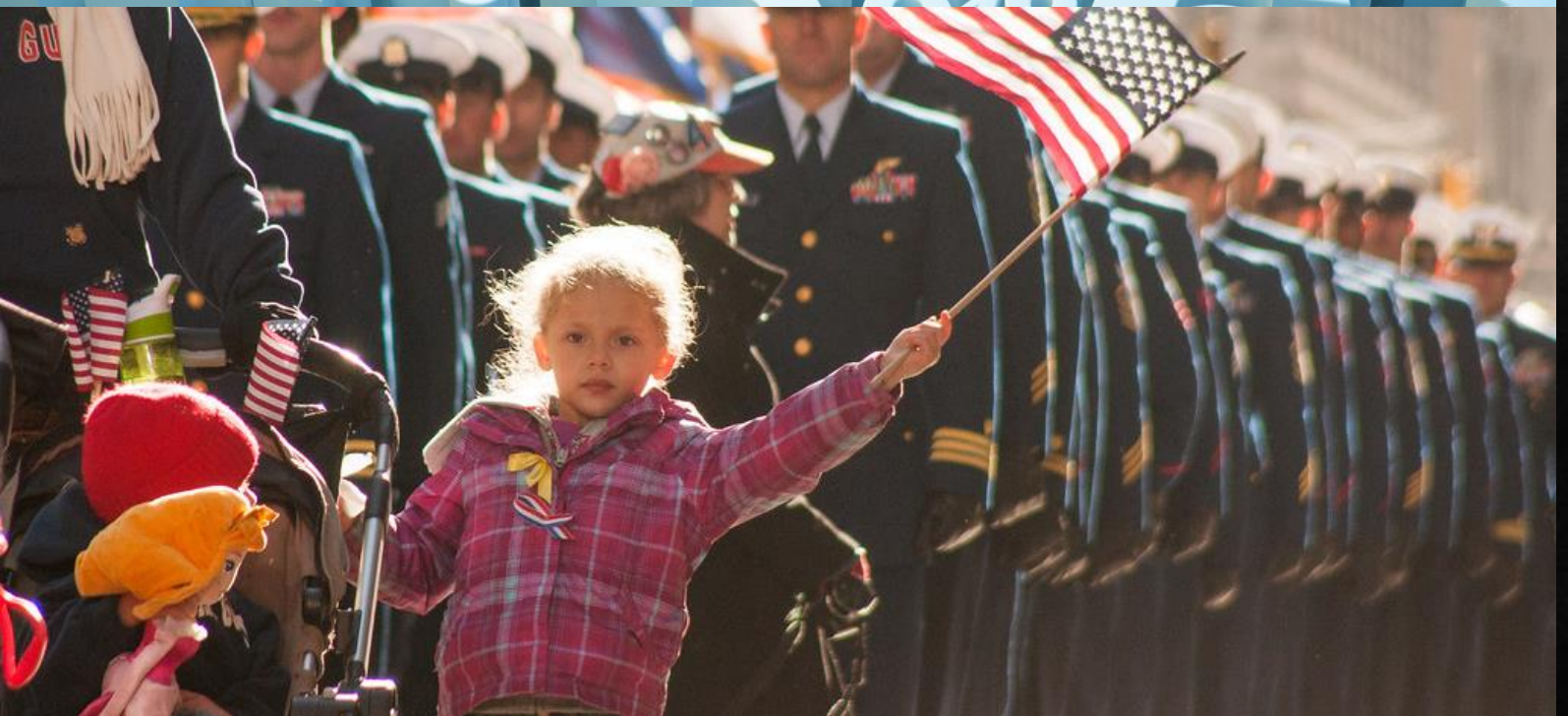

Consistency in US
ATTENDANCE DATA

Recording | Reporting | Utilization

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Graczyk, P. A., Gentle-Genitty, C., Patnode, A. H., Moulton, S. E. (*Manuscript under review*). Searching for consistency in attendance data recording, reporting, and utilization in the US.

Searching for Consistency in Attendance Data

Recording, Reporting, and Utilization in US

Focus of Review Study

Relevant Background Information

Similarities | Differences

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Our Review Study

Research Questions

What are the K-12 consistencies in US attendance data recording, reporting, and utilization?

What might be the implications of our review for practice, research, and policy?

Two Levels: National and State

Method

National Center for Education Statistics

(US Department of Education)

Two (2) State Departments of Education

Case and secondary data analyses

Connecticut

(in the Northeast US)

Indiana

(in the Midwest US)

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Background

Since the Pandemic Started…

MARCH-JUNE 2020

PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHUT DOWN

2020-2022

SCHOOLS SWITCHED BETWEEN IN-PERSON TO REMOTE INSTRUCTION

2022-2023

MOST PUBLIC SCHOOLS RETURNED TO IN-PERSON STUDENTS ARE BACK IN SCHOOL

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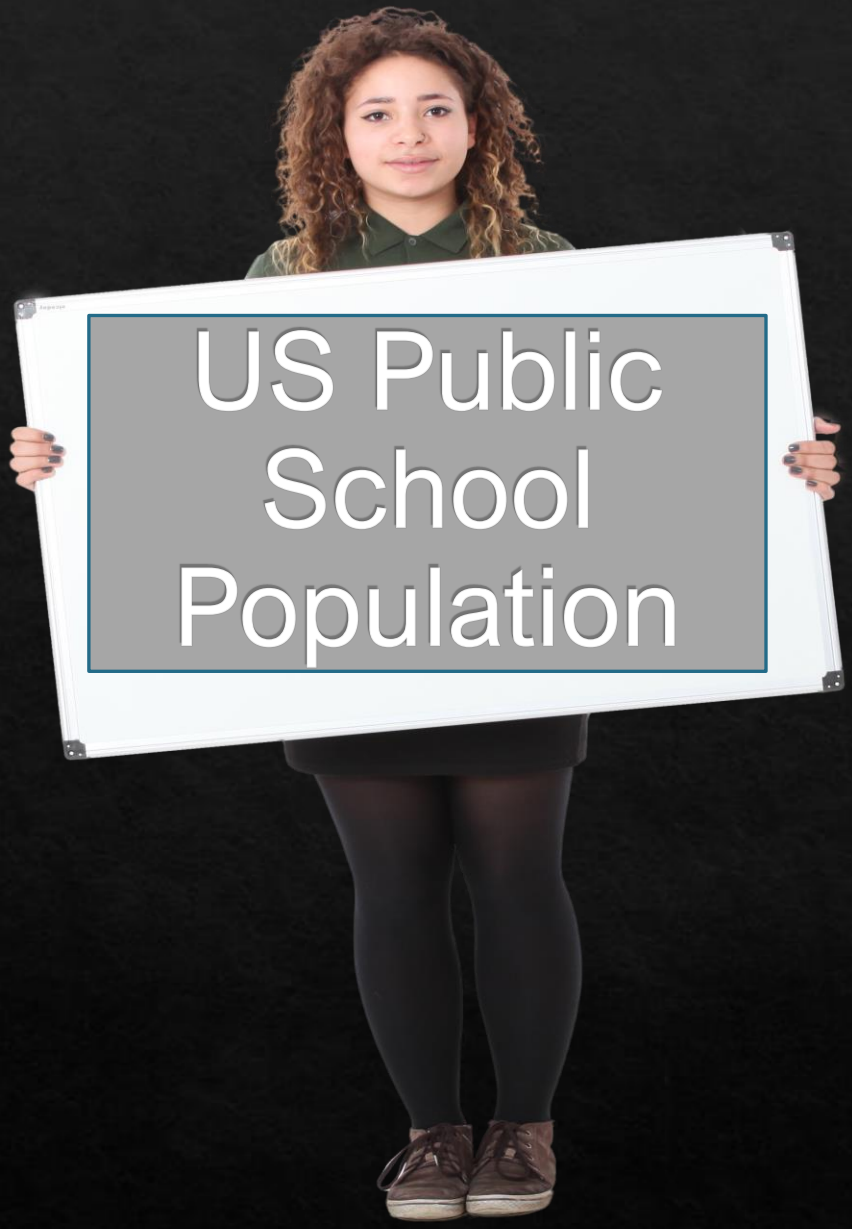

As of Fall 2021...

48,100,000
Kindergarten to 12th grade

Largest demographic groups…

- 46% White
- 28% Hispanic
- 15% Black

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The Condition of Education 2022: National Center for Education Statistics

National Data Specific to School Attendance

US Department of Education:

- For the 20-21 school year, 20.5% of students in the US were chronically absent (CA), i.e., missed 10% or more of school
  - 20.5% = 10,100,372 school-aged children and youth
  - Significant increase from prior year when CA rate was 11.9%

- AND 20.5% is most likely an underestimate!
  - Many schools did not track attendance during the height of the pandemic

Data from several states suggest that CA rates likely *doubled* last year from *pre-pandemic* levels (Chang, Balfanz, & Byrnes, September 2022)

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Federal Laws and Statutes

US Constitution

- Education is primarily the responsibility of each state
- Thus, education in the US is decentralized

However, the US Department of Education (DOE) can and does require states to provide specific data in order to receive federal funding.

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Federal Laws and Statutes

Laws related to Civil Rights

- US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) collects data *biennially* (every two years) to ensure that schools comply with civil rights laws
- 2013-2014: OCR started to collect *chronic absenteeism (CA)* data disaggregated by student subgroups (racial/ethnic, special education, and SES status)
  - Chronic absenteeism: includes ALL absences
  - For 2013 and 2015 data collection: OCR defined CA as missing 15 days in previous school year
  - Since 2017: OCR defined CA as missing 10% or more of school in previous year

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The Condition of Education 2022: National Center for Education Statistics

Federal Laws and Statutes

Elementary and Secondary Education Act and its reauthorizations (Currently: *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),* 2015)

- Requires states to develop and submit a "School Accountability Framework" to the US Department of Education for approval

- ESSA *allows* states to include chronic absenteeism as a School Quality/Student Success (SQSS) indicator in their School Accountability Framework

Note: 36 states, including Connecticut and Indiana, *chose* chronic absenteeism as one of their quality indicators

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Findings

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Examples of Attendance & Related Data Recorded, Reported, & Used at the National Level

- Total Number of students enrolled in school
- Average daily attendance rates
- Chronic absences
- Excused & unexcused (truancy) absences
- Expulsions
- Suspensions
  - In school
  - Out-of-School
- High school (secondary) graduation rates
- High school (secondary) drop-out rates

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Similarities: US, Connecticut, & Indiana…

- Collect, report, and use both attendance and absenteeism data
- Provide access to their data in multiple ways (transparency)
- Define chronic absenteeism as absent from school 10% or more of previous school year
- Disaggregate Chronic Absenteeism Data by Student Subgroups
  - Student groups at greatest risk: Black, Hispanic, Students with disabilities, and Students living in poverty

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Similarities
US, Connecticut, & Indiana…

- Provide guidance to schools on evidence-based prevention & intervention strategies

- Moving away from "seat time" model of attendance to include codes for…
  - Virtual (remote) Learning
  - Participation
  - Engagement

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Similarities: Both Connecticut & Indiana…

- Collect attendance/absenteeism data annually
- Taking positive action to address chronic absenteeism & differences in CA rates across student groups
- Use a threshold of 10 or more unexcused absences as a point at which schools must address student's *truancy* & specify how schools must respond
- Provide data publicly at the state, district, and school levels in multiple ways

  Examples:

  - "Report cards" in Connecticut
  - "Annual performance and progress reports" in Indiana

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Additional State Highlights

Connecticut

- "In attendance": Student in school or school activity at least ½ day
- Analyzes data by neighborhood (zip codes)
- Discontinued court involvement in truancy cases
- Attendance Review Teams
- Encourages schools to use MTSS framework

Indiana

- Students who are habitually truant (10% or more unexcused absences in SY) may not be issued a driver's permit/license until age 18
- Has "model attendance framework"
  - "Persistent attendance": In school at least 96% of the time
  - "Improved attendance": Increase of at least 3% from previous year

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Major Conclusions

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Major Conclusions

- **Both attendance and absenteeism data should be collected & used frequently**
  - Lack of focus on attendance limits efforts to:
    - define “satisfactory attendance” and “improved attendance” operationally,
    - determine their impact on student outcomes, and
    - set goals to improve school attendance.
  - Current definitions of “satisfactory attendance” and “improved attendance” have face validity but lack empirical support
  - More frequent data collection can result in the ability to monitor changes and trends in data more quickly and respond to them

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Major Conclusions

- **All absences should be recorded, reported, and used**
  - All absences, regardless of reason, limits a student's ability to benefit from the academic, social, and language-enrichment opportunities available in school (e.g., Kearney & Graczyk, 2020).

- **It's time to move away from the "seat time" model of attendance and use a broader model that includes attendance, participation, and engagement (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2021)**
  - Pandemic highlighted this need
  - Future research could help determine which metrics would be *reliable* and *valid* under which *conditions* and *most useful* in relation to *improved student outcomes*

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Major Conclusions

- **Attendance and absenteeism data should be disaggregated by student subgroups to monitor for differences**
  - Most likely that differences do exist and need to be addressed
- **Multiple pathways to access attendance/absenteeism data are good!**
  - Allow for improved access to data
  - Researchers and external entities can do secondary analyses
  - Enhance accountability
  - Reports can provide meaningful information in easy-to-read formats for a variety of stakeholders, including prospective home buyers!

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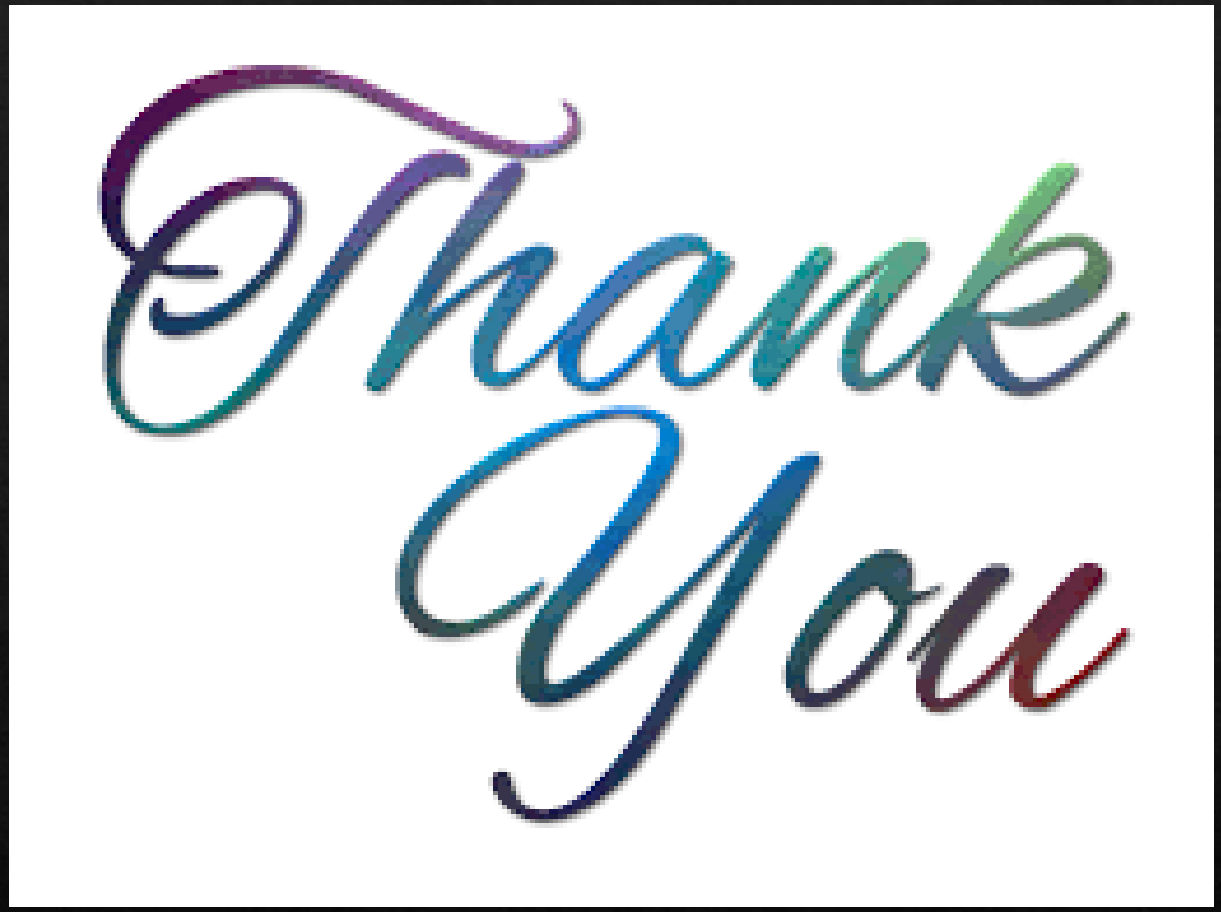

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