

Chronic Absenteeism in Hartford Public Schools

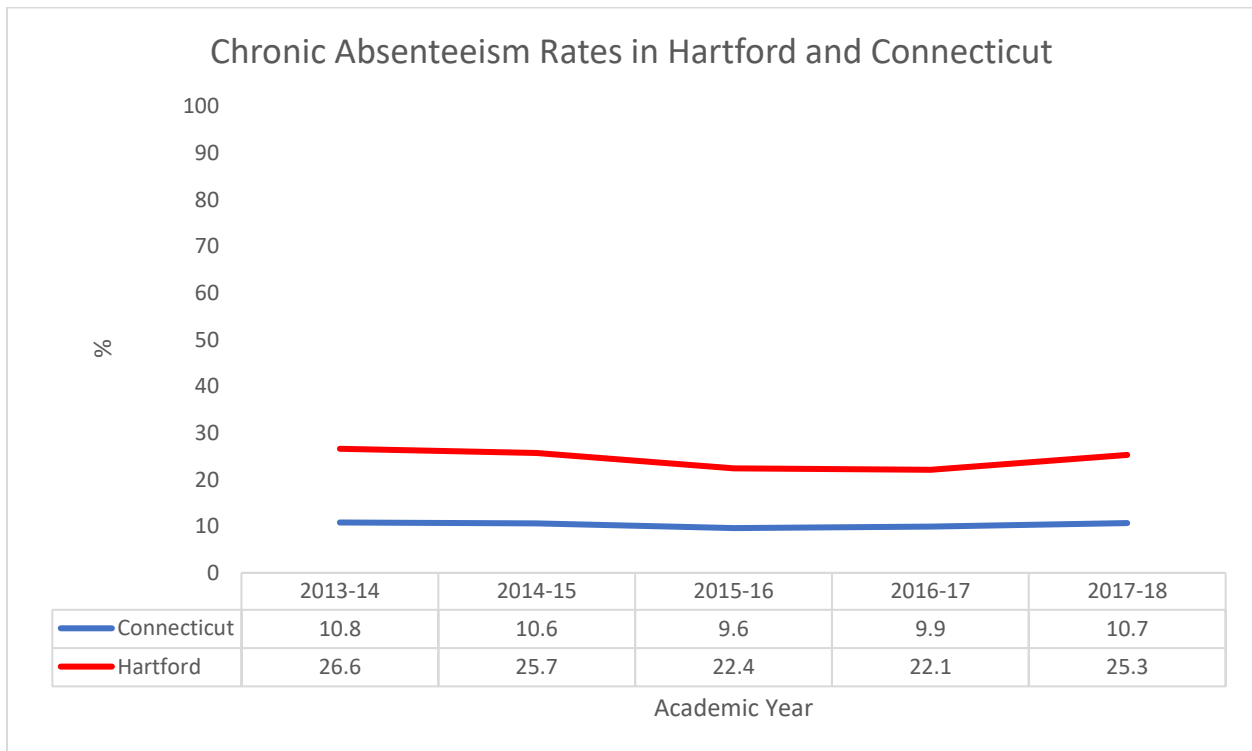
Background

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 24%, which is astonishingly high, even when compared against peer school districts in the state.



The difference between the two lines on that graph might not look particularly dramatic, but that’s just because the graphs in this report use a scale that goes up to 100%, and the highest value represented is 26.6%. As you can see from the data table included beneath the graph, the chronic absenteeism rate in Hartford is around 2.5 times as high as the overall rate for the state of Connecticut.

Chronic Absenteeism Across the State

At Achieve Hartford, we have a standard set of 13 districts we like to use for these comparisons. In this case, they can be broken up into four groups.

Group 1 includes West Hartford, Farmington, and Glastonbury, which all have consistently lower rates of chronic absenteeism than the state at large. Group 2 consists of Stamford, Jumoke Academy, and Achievement First Hartford Academy, which have fluctuated, but which are basically average for Connecticut. Group 3 (CREC and East Hartford) is doing somewhat worse, with 5-year averages in the realm of 15%.

Group 4 (Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport, Manchester, and Waterbury) is doing *much* worse.

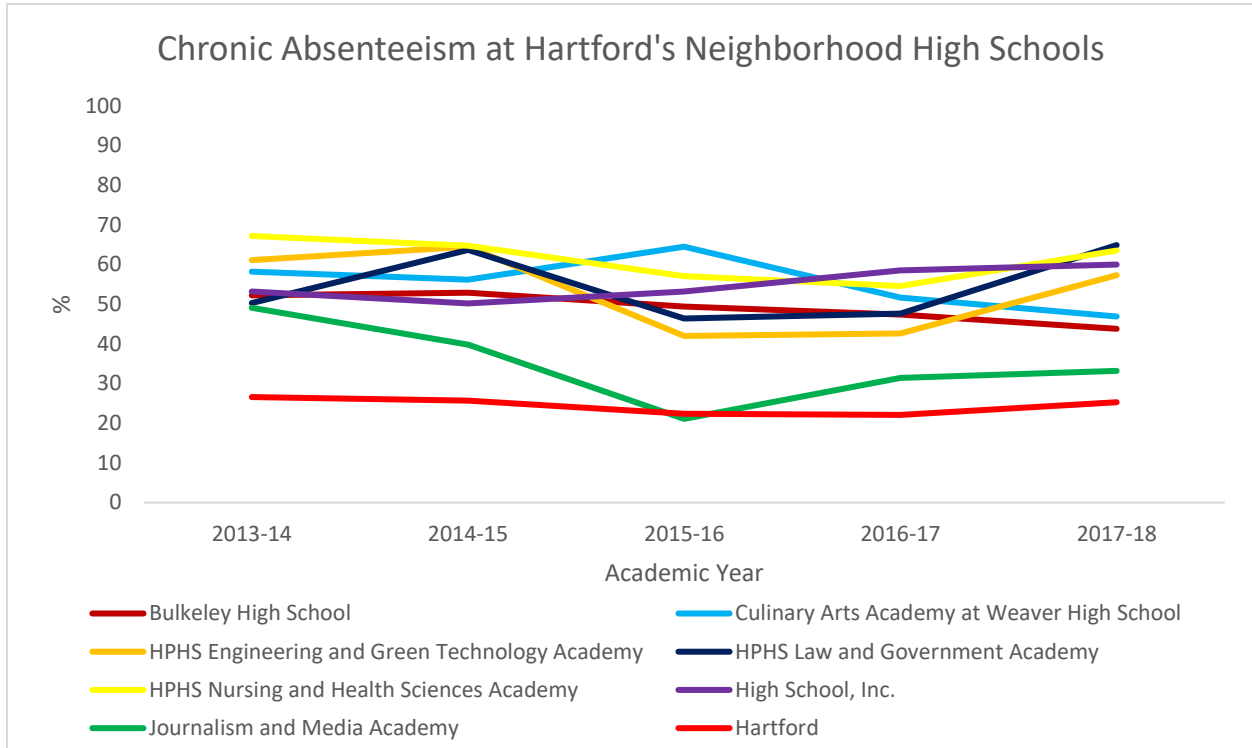
% Chronic Absenteeism in a Selection of Connecticut Districts					
District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Hartford School District	26.6	25.7	22.4	22.1	25.3
New Britain School District	19.2	20.7	18	20.1	22.2
New Haven School District	24.7	25.6	19.9	18.3	19.9
Bridgeport School District	21.2	19	17.4	18.3	19.3
Manchester School District	12.4	13.3	14.4	16.9	19.2
Waterbury School District	20.6	18.6	16.2	16	18.2
East Hartford School District	12.9	16.1	12.9	14	16.4
Capitol Region Education Council	13.7	15	11.6	14	16.1
Stamford School District	10	13.9	11.7	8.9	10.7
Connecticut	10.8	10.6	9.6	9.9	10.7
Jumoke Academy District	6.2	7.9	6.3	14	10.1
Achievement First Hartford Academy Inc. District	6.1	10.6	10.1	9.1	6.5
West Hartford School District	5.1	5.3	5.3	6.2	6.2
Farmington School District	6.4	5.8	4.5	4.5	4.9
Glastonbury School District	2.8	3	2.7	3.3	3.1

But to group Hartford with those districts almost obscures the degree of the problem. In fact, the chronic absenteeism problem in Hartford is so acute, that there are only 5 districts in the state performing worse (see Appendix A for data on the highest rates of chronic absenteeism). Three of the five are individual charter high schools which are legally defined as districts; the fourth is a regional district; and the fifth is Unified School District #1, which serves individuals incarcerated by the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

If one considers only traditional school districts, Hartford Public Schools consistently holds the dubious honor of being #1 in chronic absenteeism. The districts listed above as Group 4 are all among the fifteen districts in the state with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism (see Appendix A), and yet they are all still doing *markedly better* than Hartford Public Schools. What exactly is going on?

Chronic Absenteeism in High School

Put simply, the difference is encapsulated by what’s going on at our neighborhood high schools, all seven of which have been posting the highest rates of chronic absenteeism in the district for several years running.



While several other schools in Hartford have high rates of absenteeism (see Appendix B for detail), these are the ones that are pulling the rate upward. It is important to note that this phenomenon is not exclusive to Hartford; 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
Average	10.8	10.6	9.6	9.9	10.7
Grade 9	14.2	13.7	12.9	12.6	13.4
Grade 10	13.7	14.3	13.3	13.3	14.1
Grade 11	14.8	14.5	14.1	14.3	14.7
Grade 12	19.5	18.4	17.8	18	19.4

This makes the five districts with higher rates of chronic absenteeism than Hartford (Appendix A) even more alarming; critically, **all five serve grades 9-12 either exclusively or overwhelmingly.**



Activating private sector leaders
to solve education problems.

221 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

860-244-3333
info@achievehartford.org
www.achievehartford.org

Conclusions

The rates of chronic absenteeism at the seven neighborhood high schools are not just high; they are the highest rates in a district which has among the highest rates in the state. Many of our other schools are doing poorly, but those results are more in line with the rates seen above at comparable Alliance Districts with otherwise similar outcomes, challenges, and demographics. **These seven high schools are what set us apart, and the source of our exceptionally high rate of chronic absenteeism.**

It is on those schools that resources must be focused to solve this problem. Based on this data, we suspect the district is not prepared to do it alone, and we look forward to seeing a coordinated city-wide effort.

APPENDIX A: Chronic Absenteeism in Connecticut

Below are the 15 districts in Connecticut with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism. Note that all of the districts included as Group 4 in the district comparison above fall within this range. They are also all Alliance Districts, as is Ansonia School District.

As noted in the main text of this report, all five of the districts with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism exclusively or overwhelmingly serve students in grades 9-12, who have elevated rates of chronic absenteeism across the board. The top three are individual charter high schools, each of which is designed specifically to re-engage disengaged youth. The fourth is a regional district, and the fifth serves individuals incarcerated by the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

Districts in Connecticut with the Highest % of Chronically Absent Students					
District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Path Academy District**	N/A	82.8	100	100	100
Stamford Academy District	*	86.9	99.3	97.5	80.4
Explorations District	29.1	28.4	30.6	28.8	37.5
Eastern Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (EASTCONN)	13.4	32.3	33.9	34.3	35.8
Unified School District #1	21.9	31.8	34.3	32.1	30.1
Hartford School District	26.6	25.7	22.4	22.1	25.3
Area Cooperative Educational Services	21.7	20.6	18.2	19.3	22.8
New Britain School District	19.2	20.7	18	20.1	22.2
Cooperative Educational Services	15.8	18.9	16.4	19.7	21
New Haven School District	24.7	25.6	19.9	18.3	19.9
Bridgeport School District	21.2	19	17.4	18.3	19.3
Manchester School District	12.4	13.3	14.4	16.9	19.2
Ansonia School District	11.3	16.3	14.5	18	18.8
Interdistrict School for Arts and Comm District	11.2	12.3	7.3	7.7	18.7
Waterbury School District	20.6	18.6	16.2	16	18.2
<i>N/A indicates that data was unavailable</i>					
<i>* indicates that data was suppressed for privacy reasons</i>					
<i>**Path Academy recently surrendered its charter to operate following a state investigation</i>					

APPENDIX B: Chronic Absenteeism in Hartford Public School District

% Chronic Absenteeism in HPS Schools, Ranked from Highest to Lowest (by 2017-18 data)					
School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
HPHS Law and Government Academy	50.3	63.7	46.4	47.6	64.9
HPHS Nursing and Health Sciences Academy	67.2	64.7	57.1	54.6	63.5
High School, Inc.	53.2	50.2	53.2	58.5	60
HPHS Engineering and Green Technology Academy	61.1	64.5	42	42.6	57.3
Culinary Arts Academy at Weaver High School	58.2	56.2	64.5	51.7	46.9
Bulkeley High School	52.2	52.9	49.4	47.4	43.8
Milner School	40.9	38.7	26.4	26.5	38
Asian Studies Academy at Bellizzi School	28.2	40.3	34.9	38	36.4
Batchelder School	27.5	18.3	22.2	28	34.2
Wish Museum School	26.4	26.9	25.7	34.9	33.5
Journalism and Media Academy	49.1	39.8	21.1	31.4	33.2
Simpson-Waverly School	43.2	35.6	29.6	25.4	31.1
M. L. King, Jr. Middle School	25.9	26.3	24.6	20	31
SAND School	47.5	40	26.4	17.5	29.4
Burr School	27.4	25.2	23	19.1	28.7
Burns Latino Studies Academy	32.1	34.6	34.1	25.4	28
McDonough Middle School	38.2	23.2	21.4	28.4	25.5
Global Communications Academy	17.6	8.4	12.1	15.8	24.8
M. D. Fox School	35.4	30.6	19.8	23.5	22.3
Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School	1.6	26.2	20.1	19.5	21.9
Naylor/CCSU Leadership Academy	22.5	21.9	19.6	27.8	21.2
West Middle School	26.1	20.5	22.9	18.6	19.2
Sport and Medical Sciences Academy	19.7	15.4	15.3	16.2	18.7
Classical Magnet School	4.6	7.7	7.9	9.4	17.9
Pathways Academy of Technology and Design	16.2	19.2	21.3	18.7	17.6
Parkville Community School	26.2	20	24.2	14.5	17.5
Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts	14.1	13.4	4.1	4.9	17.3
Betances Early Reading Lab Magnet School	36.1	15.7	16.7	18.4	17.1
Rawson School	20.4	22.6	18.4	13	17.1
Sanchez School	27.1	22.5	16.9	17.6	16.9
Kennelly School	22.2	25.6	23.6	20.5	15
Breakthrough Magnet School, North	*	9.7	9.1	9.5	14.4
Great Path Academy at MCC	12.3	10.9	10	12.5	13.2
University High School of Science and Engineering	10.8	9.2	10.7	11.1	12.1
Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy	7.3	7.8	8.9	7.1	11.7
Betances STEM Magnet School	14.1	6.7	4.4	7.5	11.6
Environmental Sciences Magnet at Hooker School	9.6	5.7	6.9	8	11.1



Activating private sector leaders
to solve education problems.

221 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

860-244-3333
info@achievehartford.org
www.achievehartford.org

Montessori Magnet at Moylan School	9.3	12.8	*	9.6	10.7
Webster Micro Society Magnet School	6.4	9.7	3.5	11	10.3
Capital Preparatory Magnet School	11.9	4.5	4.9	7.2	9.2
Montessori Magnet at Fisher School	6.5	10.7	7.1	10.7	7
Breakthrough Magnet School, South	4.6	7.7	6.8	5.3	6.4
Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy	12.1	10.9	11.6	5.4	6.1
STEM Magnet at Fisher School	2.8	7.9	6.1	4.8	5.7
<i>* indicates that data was suppressed for privacy reasons</i>					
<i>Magnet schools highlighted in gray (this table only)</i>					