

# Attendance Insights Briefing: Student Attendance Pilot with EveryDay Labs Leads to Student Gains in Louisiana

## Executive Summary

During the 2024–2025 school year, seven Louisiana school systems participated in an EveryDay Labs pilot program aimed at reducing chronic absenteeism. This initiative, a collaboration of Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and Success Through Attendance Recovery Task Force (STAR), yielded significant improvements.

**Participating school systems experienced an average 11.5% reduction in the number of chronically absent students, resulting in an additional 137,722 days of school attendance during the '24-'25 school year.**

## Background

Following the pandemic, Louisiana's chronic absenteeism rate peaked at 28% in 2021, indicating a concerning trend of students missing 10% or more of school days. With 1 in 4 students chronically absent, BESE, LDOE, STAR and BRAC were concerned about the impact on both student outcomes and crime. Chronic absenteeism has been directly linked to lower reading proficiency, academic underachievement, and reduced high school graduation rates.<sup>1</sup> “It raises a huge concern for us. I don’t think most people realize how significant these numbers are,” shared BESE President Ronnie Morris.<sup>2</sup> In response to these persistent challenges, BESE, LDOE, STAR and BRAC committed to addressing student attendance to enhance overall student achievement and outcomes across the state.

Early indicators suggest these investments are proving effective. In 2024 the collaboration launched a pilot program inspired by the attendance improvement success of Jefferson Parish Schools during the 2022–2023 school year.

<sup>1</sup>: Effects of chronic absenteeism on student academic performance, high school graduation, drug and alcohol use, incarceration, and adverse outcomes have been well documented. A sample of research includes the following: Gottfried, M. A. Evaluating the relationship between student attendance and achievement in urban elementary and middle schools: An instrumental variables approach. *American Educational Research Journal* 47(2), 434–465 (2010). Gershenson, S., Jacknowitz, A. & Brannegan, A. Are student absences worth the worry in US primary schools? *Education Finance and Policy* 12(2), 137–165 (2017). Allensworth, E. M. & Easton, J. Q. What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research (2007). Goodman, J. Flaking out: Student absences and snow days as disruptions of instructional time Working Paper No. 20221 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014), Gottfried, M. A. The detrimental effects of missing school: Evidence from urban siblings. *American Journal of Education* 117(2), 147–182 (2011). Byrnes, V. & Reyna, R. Summary of state level analysis of early warning indicators. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Everyone Graduates Center (2012). Schoeneberger, J. Longitudinal attendance patterns: developing high school dropouts. *The Clearinghouse: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 85(1), 7–14 (2012). Henry, K. L., & Thornberry, T. P. Truancy and escalation of substance use during adolescence. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 71(1), 115–124 (2010). Baker, M. L., Sigmon, J. N. & Nugent, M. E. Truancy reduction: Keeping students in school. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (2001).<sup>2</sup>: Nola.com, Dec 15, 2024, “Louisiana education leader sounds alarm about chronic absenteeism”  
<sup>2</sup>: [Nola.com](https://www.nola.com), Dec 15, 2024, “Louisiana education leader sounds alarm about chronic absenteeism”

This improvement was achieved through a partnership with EveryDay Labs, a leading provider of attendance improvement services and research and focused on both early intervention for declining student attendance and effective communication with families

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Recognizing the potential for broader impact, BESE, LDOE, STAR and BRAC, expanded this EveryDay Labs initiative to six additional Louisiana school systems in 2024, including Calcasieu, Central Community, East Baton Rouge, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, and Zachary Community. Collectively, these seven districts represent 20% of the state's K-12 student population, varying in size from 4,000 to 34,000 students, and with chronic absenteeism rates ranging from 11% to 35%.

## **Partnering to Reduce Student Absences**

EveryDay Labs customized its attendance improvement services to meet each district's needs. This comprehensive approach included data intelligence, staff professional development, and evidence-based family communication strategies designed to encourage families to prioritize attendance, and to make it easier for busy school administrators to address attendance challenges and support families.

The initial phase of the partnership focused on family communication. EveryDay Labs implemented chronic absence "nudges" in the form of personalized letters and text messages. These communications, translated into the family's home language, were sent directly to families of students who were either chronically absent or at risk of becoming so. The carefully crafted messaging aimed to be effective in prompting improved attendance. This direct communication by EveryDay Labs not only conserved valuable school staff time but also proved to be cost-effective, leading to 45,901 students improving their attendance after receiving a nudge.

**Feedback from families indicated a positive response to the improved communication. For instance, a parent from East Baton Rouge stated, "I appreciate the support in keeping up with my daughter's attendance."**

Educators also noted a difference. Alexa Hookfin from Tangipahoa Parish explained: **"The chronic absence nudges immediately made conversations with parents and families easier. The tone of the nudge letters is serious but not threatening, making parents more receptive to talking about attendance, and they'll call to let us know what is going on. They improved our communication with families while saving staff time, because EveryDay Labs sends them out."**

Subsequently, the partnership focused on empowering school staff to foster a strong school climate and provide tailored attendance support. EveryDay Labs provided a data intelligence platform that facilitated the identification and addressing of individual student and family needs. This platform allowed staff to document challenges (e.g., transportation, uniforms) and view parent inquiries and requests made via the EveryDay Labs team. Many school systems leveraged community partnerships to address identified family needs, such as clothing and housing assistance.

**“We recognize the value of our students and the importance of their trajectories through their learning careers — and attendance is a fundamental prerequisite to that success. That’s why we made it a priority to help bring this partnership together. The gains we’re seeing show what’s possible when we work collectively and with urgency to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive,” says Brace "Trey" Godfrey, Senior Vice President of Policy at Baton Rouge Area Chamber**

Additionally, EveryDay Labs conducted professional development workshops to train staff on identifying "dip days" (days with historically lower attendance) and implementing incentives to encourage attendance on those days. School staff reported that the platform significantly optimized their time, allowing them to concentrate on building relationships with students and families rather than dedicating time to data analysis and administrative tasks.



## Results

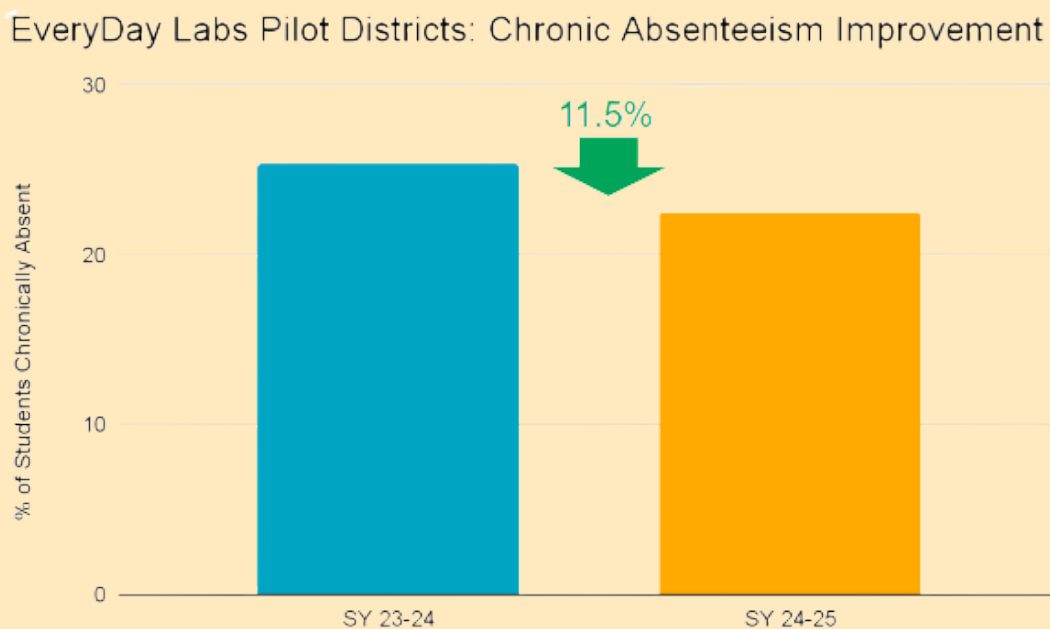
All seven school systems participating in the pilot demonstrated reductions in chronic absenteeism. The average reduction in chronically absent students was 11.5% (2.9 points), with the collective improvement resulting in students attending an additional 137,722 days of school.

Six of the seven school systems saw improvements similar to or greater than the national average.

- East Baton Rouge Parish, Calcasieu Parish, and Jefferson Parish reduced chronic absenteeism by 6-10%
- Tangipahoa Parish, Zachary Community made significant gains of 11-20%
- West Baton Rouge reduced chronic absenteeism by over 30%

This remarkable progress underscores the dedication, strategic focus, and collaborative spirit fostered by district leaders and school staff across all seven participating systems," stated Emily Bailard, CEO of EveryDay Labs. "We are committed to building upon these gains, ensuring every student has the fundamental opportunity to learn and thrive."

**Figure 1**  
***The number of chronically absent students decreased by 11.5% in school year 24-25.<sup>3</sup>***



**For More Information:**  
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<sup>3</sup>: The attendance data shown is preliminary and will not exactly match state reported absenteeism numbers. It was extracted directly from each district's student information system and represents the attendance of students who were actively enrolled at the end of the respective school year.