

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF STRATEGY & OPERATIONS OFFICER**

**Maurice L. Woods  
Chief Strategy & Operations Officer**

*Signatures on File*

August 25, 2015

TO: All Principals

FROM: Maurice L. Woods  
Chief Strategy & Operations Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D., Designee  
School Performance & Accountability

SUBJECT: **AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2012-13 through 2014-15**

Student Assessment & Research staff have completed an examination of students' attendance in Broward County Public Schools during the 2012-13 through 2014-15 school years. The District's Average Daily Attendance rate (ADA) **increased** from 93.8% to 94.7% for the three years examined. Centers registered the lowest ADA rates ranging from 70.9% to 78.7%.

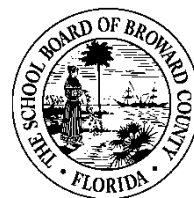
During the most recent school year, ADA rates were similar for Black students (94.6%), Hispanic students (94.7%), and White students (94.6%). However, when Black students were absent, their absences were more likely to be unexcused (63.3%) as compared to Hispanic (45.7%) and White (32.7%) students. These findings were similar for all three years examined.

Centers registered the highest rate of absences (40 days per student). High schools averaged the next highest rate (11 days per student), followed by elementary schools (8 days per student), multi-level schools (7 days per student), and middle schools with (6 missed days per student). A similar trend can be seen when comparing the rate of unexcused absence to excused absence. At centers 88.8% of all registered absences (excused, unexcused, and suspension days) were unexcused. Multi-level schools had the next largest percentage (54.4%), followed by high schools (47.6%), elementary schools (45.2%), and middle schools (29.7%).

Questions regarding this report should be directed to **Director Richard Baum, Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500**. This memo and report may also be accessed via the Student Assessment & Research website at: <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/index.htm>.

VSW/MLW/NB/RGB/SLS/JAC:rs  
Attachments

cc: School Board Members  
Senior Leadership Team  
Veda Hudge, Director, Office of Service Quality  
Directors, School Performance & Accountability



# Research Brief

## AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2012-13 through 2014-15

### Executive Summary

#### *Overall Trends in Attendance*

- The District's average daily attendance rate **increased** by 0.9 percentage points from 2012-13 (93.8%) to 2014-15 (94.7%) (Appendix A).
- Attendance was lower (93.7%) for high schools compared to elementary schools (95.5%) and middle schools (96.3%). Attendance at centers was the lowest (73.0%), representing an increase in the average daily attendance rate at centers of 2.1 percentage points from the 2013-14 school year to the 2014-15 school year (Appendix A and Figure 1).
- Students enrolled at centers missed an average of 40 days during the 2014-15 school year. The average high school student missed 11 days, middle school student 6 days, and elementary school student 8 days during the same time period (Appendix B).

#### *Attendance Type*

- The District overall registered a **decrease** in the number and rate of unexcused absences from 2013-14 to 2014-15 (from 55.9% to 49.2%) (Figure 3 and Appendix D).
- Students enrolled at centers were about ten times more likely to be absent without excuse than to have an excused absence (Figure 3 and Appendix D).
- For the 2014-15 school year, multi-level schools had the highest percent of students with perfect attendance, followed by centers and high schools (Table 2).
- Centers had the highest percent of students with 15 or more absences, followed by high schools and elementary schools in the 2014-15 school year (Table 2).

#### *Student Subpopulations*

- Black, Hispanic, and White students all had a similar average daily attendance rate. This was true for all three school years (Table 1 and Appendix C).
- For the 2014-15 school year, Black students had a higher rate of unexcused absences (63.3%), compared to Hispanic students (45.7%) and White students (32.7%) (Figure 4).
- Students who receive free and reduced lunch (FRL) and students with disabilities (ESE) had about a 1 percentage point lower average daily attendance rate than their non-FRL and non-ESE counterparts (Appendix C).

Student attendance was examined in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) for the three school-year periods from 2012-13 through 2014-15. This brief summarizes attendance trends, including excused and unexcused absences occurring at both traditional and charter schools.

Data from three school years, excluding summers, were included for the present analysis. For each school year, the total population reflects the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 12 who attended a BCPS school for at least five days during the year. Absences are classified according to the following guidelines:

- Excused (i.e., Parent/guardian notified the school),
- Unexcused (i.e., No parent/guardian notified the school), and
- Suspension (Days suspended are included in the total absences).<sup>1</sup>

### Overall Attendance

The Overall District Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate increased from 93.8% in 2012-13 to 94.7% in 2014-15. Figure 1 illustrates the ADA by school level for the 2012-13 through the 2014-15 school years. Examination of the figure reveals that over the three year period, the ADA increased at middle (94.9% to 96.3%) and high (91.0% to 93.7%) school levels. Multi-level schools' ADA rates were similar to that of elementary schools (Appendix A). Centers' rates decreased from 78.7% to 73.0% over the three year period. The decrease at centers maybe due to change in the application of discipline actions. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year the District's Discipline Matrix was revised to no longer suspend students for unexcused absences.

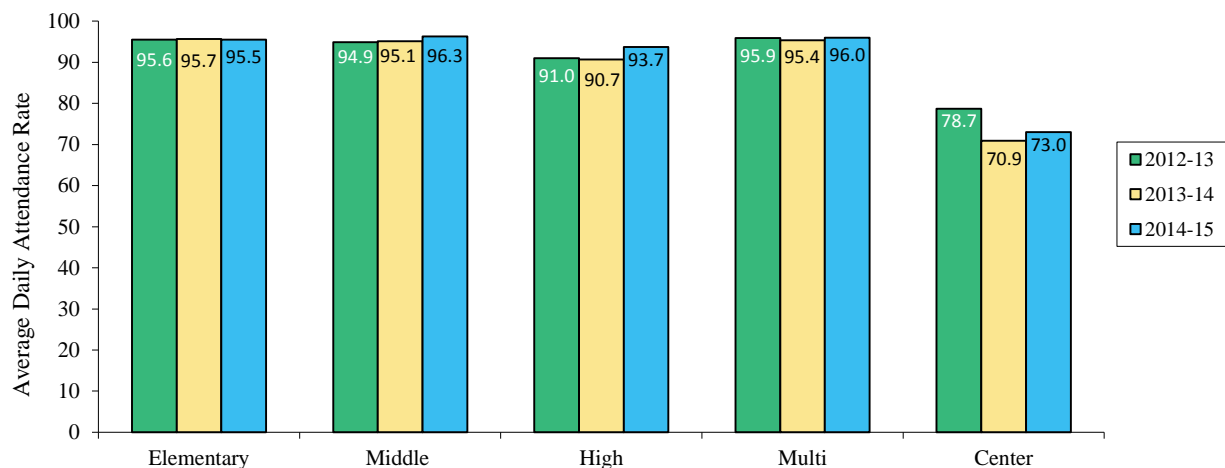


Figure 1. Average daily attendance rate, by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15.

Figure 2 shows the average number of days absent per student by school type for the three-year period. Historically, high school students averaged more days absent than middle and elementary students. In 2014-15, the average number of recorded absences decreased at the middle and high school levels. Modifications made in District's attendance-taking practices effective as of the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 2013-14 school year may account for this change. Students are now recorded as present for the day if they are reported present for any class as opposed to a designated attendance taking period (See Discussion section). Students at

<sup>1</sup> Suspensions account for <1% of all absences, therefore are not summarized separately.

centers averaged more than three times as many days absent than students at the high school level (Appendix B).

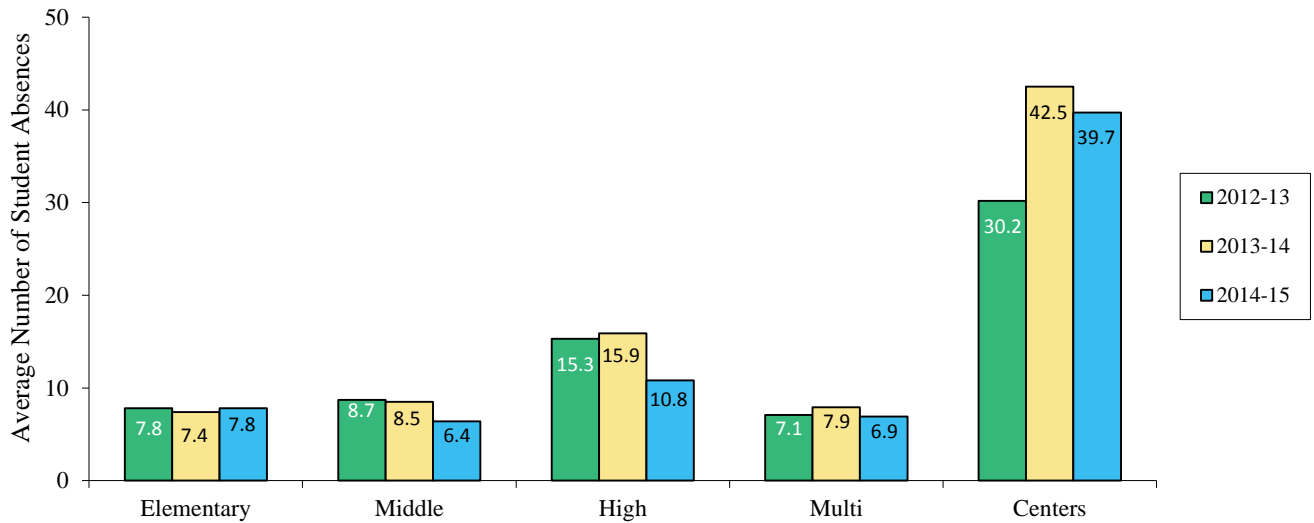


Figure 2. Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15.

Table 1 displays the average daily attendance rate by students' racial group for the three-year period. **Overall, ADA increased slightly (0.9 percentage points) in 2014-15 relative to the prior two school years.** Asian students were more likely to be in attendance compared to all other racial groups (Appendix C).

Table 1

*Student Attendance Rates by Students' Racial Group, 2012-13 through 2014-15*

Race/Ethnicity	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate
Asian	9,456	95.6	9,555	95.5	9,634	96.2
Black	107,505	93.7	106,400	93.4	107,736	94.6
Hispanic	79,161	93.7	81,204	93.6	84,785	94.7
Multi-Racial	7,030	94.1	6,957	94.0	7,043	94.8
Native American	895	92.9	860	92.7	816	94.5
Pacific Islander	240	93.8	297	93.6	360	94.6
White	66,849	93.9	64,864	93.8	63,238	94.6
<b>District</b>	<b>271,136</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>270,137</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>273,612</b>	<b>94.7</b>

Table 2 below displays the number and percent of students with perfect attendance and students with 15 or more total absences, by school level. For the most recent school year, multi-level schools had the highest percent of students with perfect attendance, followed by centers and middle schools. Centers had the highest percent of students with 15 or more absences, followed

by high schools and elementary schools. Due to the unique types of student populations served at centers, students are more likely to have perfect attendance (Exceptional Centers i.e. Bright Horizons) or be absent 15 or more days (Alternative Centers i.e. Seagull School).

Table 2  
*Number and Percent of Students with Perfect Attendance and Fifteen or More Absences by School Level, 2012-13 through 2014-15*

	No Absences		15+ Total Absences		Total
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>
<b>2012-13</b>					
Elementary	11,231	9.2	17,661	14.5	121,619
Middle	5,066	8.8	10,138	17.7	57,256
High	3,171	4.1	28,707	37.0	77,541
Center	1,525	27.2	2,958	52.8	5,603
Multi	936	10.3	1,091	12.0	9,117
<b>2013-14</b>					
Elementary	9,229	8.2	14,794	13.1	113,173
Middle	3,756	7.0	8,908	16.6	53,732
High	2,908	3.8	27,870	36.7	76,040
Center	1,253	19.8	4,022	63.6	6,328
Multi	3,282	15.7	3,276	15.7	20,864
<b>2014-15</b>					
Elementary	9,113	7.9	16,712	14.6	114,664
Middle	6,993	13.3	5,523	10.5	52,426
High	6,384	8.3	16,311	21.1	77,336
Center	1,057	15.6	4,454	65.9	6,762
Multi	3,816	17.0	2,883	12.9	22,424

### *Excused/Unexcused Absences*

Figure 3 shows the percent of excused and unexcused absences based on the total number of absences, by school level. Students enrolled at centers were almost 9 times as likely to be absent without excuse than to have an excused absence (Appendix D). An increase in the proportion of unexcused absences (77.7% to 88.8%) at the center schools may be due to change in the application of discipline actions.

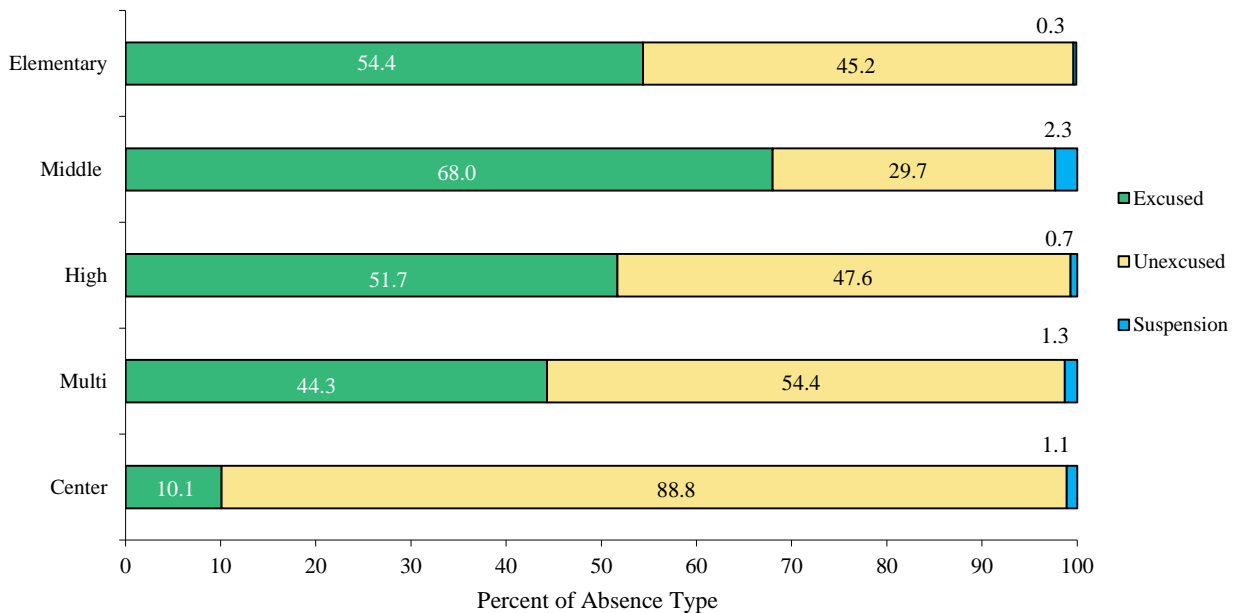


Figure 3. Rate of excused and unexcused absence, by school level, 2014-15

Figure 4 shows the percent of excused and unexcused absences based on the total number of absences, by the three major student racial groups. The data show that although Black, Hispanic, and White students all have a similar average daily attendance rate, Black students registered a higher unexcused to excused absence rate than Hispanic or White students (Appendix E).

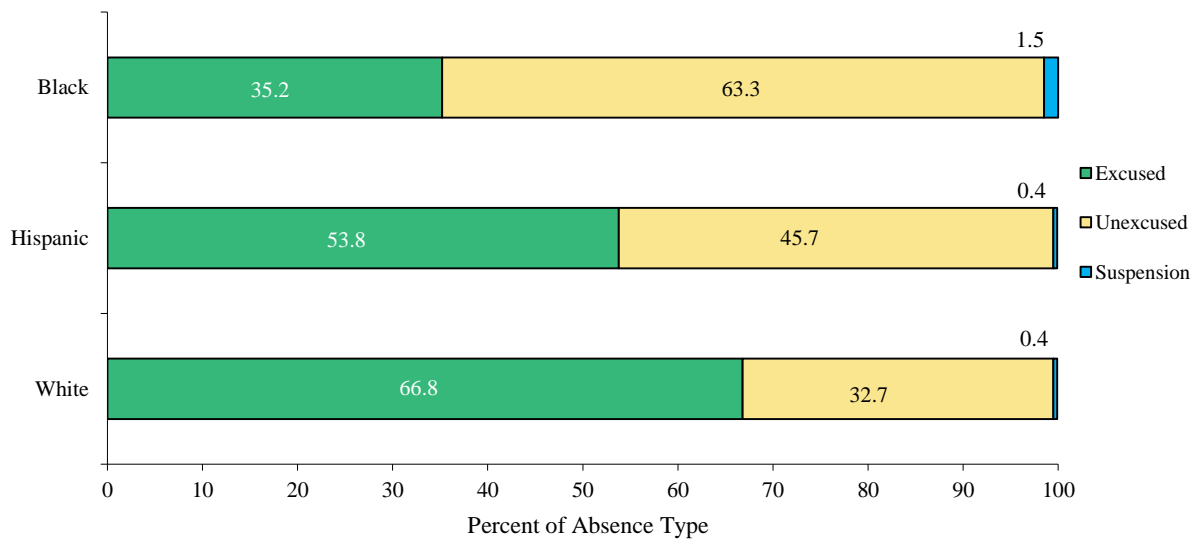


Figure 4. Rate of excused and unexcused absence, by three major racial groups, 2013-14.

## Discussion

The average daily attendance rate for the three years of this report remained stable. The Student Services department monitors attendance and initiates policy change. In order to increase the students' average daily attendance rate, the Student Services has taken the following actions:

- Made changes in attendance-taking practices effective as of the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 2013-14 school year;
  - Modified attendance rate criteria with students being recorded as present for the day if they are reported present for any class.
  - Re-coded Pinnacle and TERMS in order to report attendance rate based on the modification to the attendance rate criteria.
- Added additional support staff in 10 pilot schools to;
  - Determine best practices in reducing absenteeism,
  - Provide attendance data to schools on a regular basis for self-monitoring, and
  - Focus attention on students identified with chronic absences in order to provide direct interventions to the students.
- Provided attendance training;
  - Held district-wide webinars regarding the importance of attendance.
  - Conducted meetings/trainings with the Attendance Leadership Team at each pilot school.
- Added Incentives;
  - Recognition of schools with the highest average daily attendance rates at the regularly scheduled school board meetings.
  - Perfect Attendance Awards by levels presented in May 2015.

The Student Services department handles all matters concerning student attendance. This discussion summarizes current initiatives related to student attendance. For further information regarding attendance policies and/or initiatives, please contact Laurel E. Thompson, Ph.D., director of Student Services, (754) 321-1550.

## **Detailed Appendices**

(Available On-line at <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/Releases.htm>)

Appendix A: Average daily attendance rate by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix B: Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix C: Average daily attendance rate by students' demographics, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix D: Total number and percent of excused and unexcused absence, by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix E: Total number and percent of excused and unexcused absence, by race/ethnicity, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix F: Number of Absences, Average Daily Attendance Rate, and Number of Absences by Absence Type, by School 2012-13 through 2014-15

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