

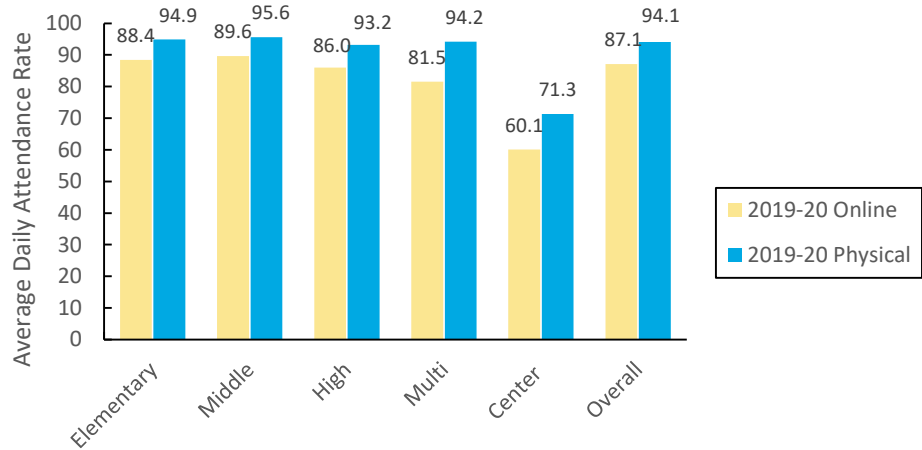
On Average

87.1%

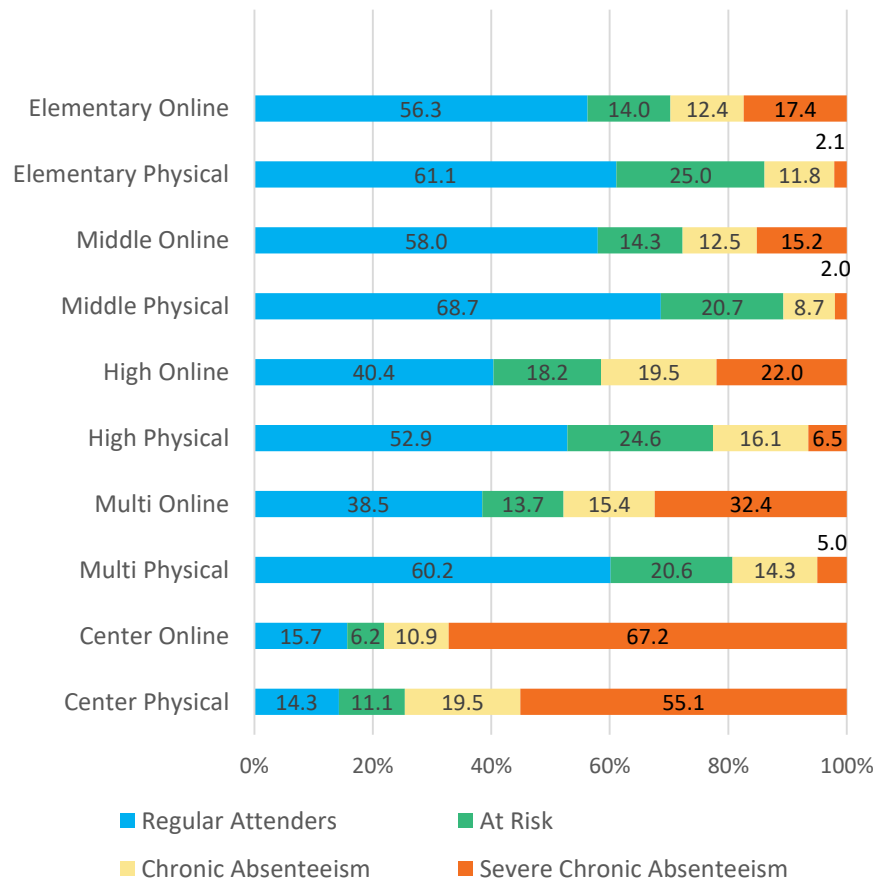
of students were in school everyday online from March 30, 2020 until the end of the school year

- The average daily attendance rate was 87.1% for online attendance compared to 94.1% for physical attendance.
- Online attendance was lower for Black (83%) and Hispanic (89%) students compared to Whites (91%); for FRL (84%) compared to non-FRL (92%) students; for ELL (84%) compared to non-ELL (88%) students; for SWD (84%) compared to non-SWD students (88%). These differences in the average daily attendance rates did not exist when students were physically in school.
- Online attendance had a higher percentage of students with perfect attendance (22% online vs. 9% physical) and a lower percentage of students absent 15 or more days (11% online vs. 13% physical) than physical attendance. These differences are due, in part, to the fewer number of days students were online vs. in a physical classroom.
- For all school types the proportion of students with chronic and severe chronic absenteeism was higher during online attendance than during physical attendance. The pattern of higher chronic and severe chronic absenteeism during online attendance than during physical attendance held true for all grade levels.

Attendance Rate by School Level, and Setting



Attendance Category by Setting by School Type



Additional Resources

- Detailed school-by-school results: <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>
- Information on BCPS's attendance programs: <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/34787>

**DANIEL GOHL, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
OFFICE OF ACADEMICS***Signatures on File*

DATE: June 3, 2021

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

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

SUBJECT: STUDENT ONLINE ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2019-20

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak early in 2020, physical schools were closed following March 13, 2020 through the end of the school year. Schools transitioned to online classes beginning March 30, 2020. This brief summarizes online attendance from March 30, 2020 through the end of the year compared to physical attendance in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) up to March 13, 2020 for the 2019-20 school year.

The average daily attendance (ADA) rate was lower for all school types for online attendance than it was for physical attendance in 2019-20. Districtwide the average daily online attendance rate (87.1%) was 7 percentage points lower than the physical ADA rate (94.1%).

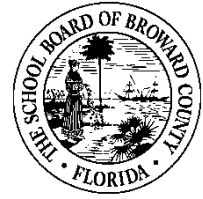
Online there was a gap in the ADA rate between White students and Hispanic and Black students, with White students (91.4%) having the highest rate, followed by Hispanic students (88.6%) and Black students (82.9%). Similarly, online there was a gap in the ADA rate between FRL (84.3%) and non-FRL students (92.3%); ELL (83.9%) and non-ELL students (87.6%); and between SWD (84.1%) and non-SWD students (87.7%). These gaps did not exist between the student subgroups in the physical ADA rates.

Broward data for the 2019-20 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attenders (0 – 4.9% absences), At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences), Chronic Absence (10 – 19.9% absences), and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). For all school types the proportion of students with chronic and severe chronic absenteeism was higher during online attendance than during physical attendance. This pattern of higher chronic and severe chronic absenteeism during online attendance than during physical attendance held for all grade levels.

Questions regarding this report should be addressed to **Richard Baum, Director of Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500**. This report may also be accessed on the Student Assessment & Research website at: <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>.

RWR/DG/VSW/RGB/RAA/JAC:rs
Attachments

cc: School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
Directors, Office of School Performance & Accountability



Research Brief

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Report from the Office of the Superintendent

Number 205
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STUDENT ONLINE ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2019-20

This brief summarizes online attendance compared to physical attendance in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) for the 2019-20 school year at innovative district schools (charter schools and agencies excluded).

METHOD

Data from online login status for the 2019-20 school year, excluding summer, were gathered from the District's data warehouse. The total population reflects the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 12 who attended a BCPS school for at least 30 days during March 30, 2020 through the end of the school year. Student absences are credited to the school the student attended the most during that time period. Absences are only classified as no student login. Online login status attendance is compared to students' physical classroom attendance for 2019-20. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, students' physical classroom attendance for 2019-20 ends on March 13, 2020. Students' daily login status (attendance) from March 30, 2020 to the end of the school year is presented in this report. Results are presented in figures and tables, and additional materials are included in appendices.

OVERALL ATTENDANCE

The overall District average daily online attendance (ADA) rate (87.1%) was 7 percentage points lower than the physical ADA rate (94.1%) in 2019-20. Figure 1 illustrates the ADA rate by school level (also see Appendix A). The physical ADA rate was higher than the online ADA rate at every school level.

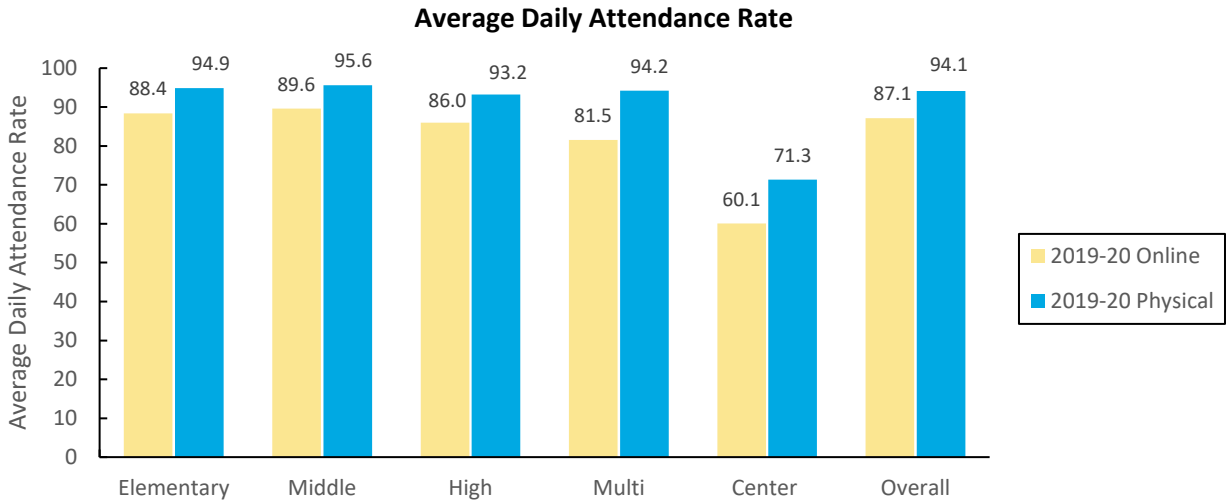


Figure 1. Average daily attendance rate, by school level, 2019-20.

Figure 2 shows the average number of days absent per student by school level for the school year. Historically, high school students averaged more days absent than middle, elementary, and multi-level students. Students at centers online averaged more than twice as many days absent as students at the high school level online (also see Appendix B), and students at physical centers averaged more than three times as many days absent as students in physical high schools. Traditionally the number of student absences increases after spring state testing takes place. The average number of absences is higher for physical school attendance than for online login status attendance because there were more days that students were in physical school than they were in school online – students were in physical school from mid-August 2019 through March 13, 2020 and were in school online from March 30, 2020 through June 2, 2020.

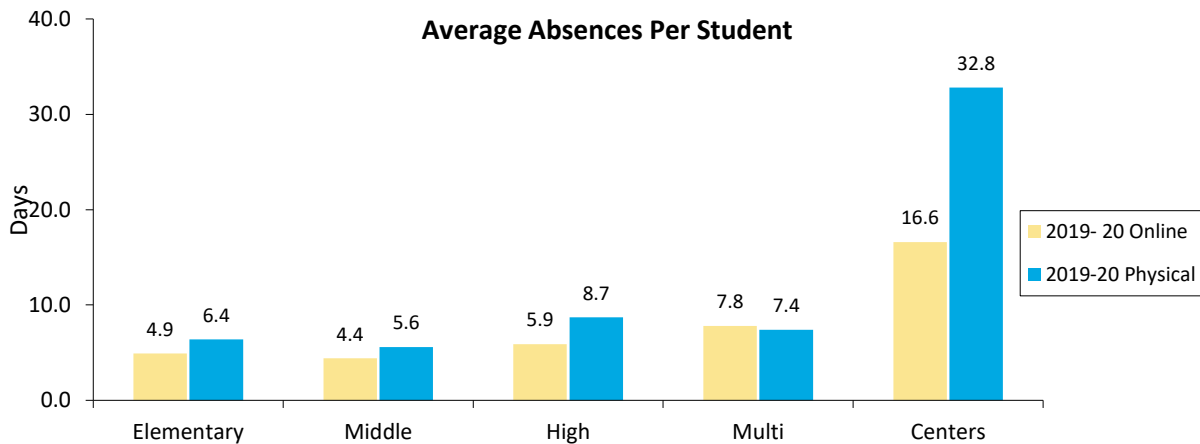


Figure 2. Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2019-20.

Table 1 displays the average daily attendance rate by student subgroups for the 2019-20 school year. For the District, the physical ADA was almost 7 percentage points higher than online ADA. Black, Hispanic, and White students had relatively the same average daily attendance rate for physical attendance (94.0%, 93.9%, and 94.0%, respectively). However, online attendance rates differed between the race/ethnicities, with White students having the highest rate (91.4) followed by Hispanic students (88.6) and Black students (82.9). Asian students had the greatest average daily attendance rate for both physical and online attendance. Similarly, no more than a one-percentage-point difference in the ADA rate existed for physical attendance within the Non-FRL/FRL, Non-ELL/ELL, and Non-SWD/SWD subgroups. Online ADA rate, however, had a difference of 8 percentage points within the Non-FRL (92.3) and FRL subgroup (84.3), and about a 4-percentage-point difference within both Non-ELL (87.6) and ELL (83.9) and Non-SWD (87.7) and SWD (84.1) subgroups (see Appendix C). Thus, the move to virtual schooling in late March of 2020 impacted various groups differently.

Table 1

Average Daily Attendance Rate by Student Subgroups, 2019-20

Race/Ethnicity	2019-20 Online		2019-20 Physical	
	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Population	Average Daily Attendance Rate
American Indian	498	86.1	515	92.9
Asian	8,024	92.4	8,154	95.7
Black	82,786	82.9	85,515	94.1
Hispanic	73,641	88.7	75,790	93.9
Multi-Racial	5,888	88.9	6,099	93.8
Pacific Island	351	90.4	359	94.6
White	41,961	91.4	43,122	94.0
NON-FRL	76,067	92.3	81,496	94.5
FRL	137,082	84.3	138,058	93.8
NON-ELL	188,236	87.6	193,678	94.0
ELL	24,913	83.9	25,876	94.2
NON-SWD	181,428	87.7	186,986	94.2
SWD	31,721	84.1	32,568	93.2
District	213,149	87.1	219,554	94.1

Table 2 displays the number and percent of students with perfect attendance and students with fifteen or more total absences, by school level. Overall online attendance had a higher

percentage of students with perfect attendance (22.2% online, 9.4% physical) and a lower percentage of students absent 15 or more days (10.5% online, 12.6% physical) than did physical attendance. Middle schools (26.4%) and elementary schools (26.3%) had the highest percent of students with perfect attendance, followed by Multi-level schools (15.2%) and High schools (15.1%). Centers had the lowest percent of students with perfect attendance (9.2%). Centers had the highest percent of students with fifteen or more absences (51.1%). Multi-level had the next highest (18.5%), followed by high schools (10.3%), elementary (9.6%), and middle schools (7.8%). The higher percentage of perfect attendance and lower percentage of students absent 15 or more days for online attendance vs. physical attendance is related to the fact that students were in school virtually for a smaller number of days in the 2020 school year than they were in school physically.

Table 2

Number and Percent of Students with Perfect Attendance and Fifteen or More Absences by School Level, 2019-20

	No Absences		15+ Total Absences		Total
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>
2019-20 Online					
Elementary	24,062	26.3	8,802	9.6	91,380
Middle	11,921	26.4	3,529	7.8	45,123
High	9,908	15.1	6,742	10.3	65,521
Center	378	9.2	2,094	51.1	4,096
Multi	1,069	15.2	1,303	18.5	7,029
2019-20 Physical					
Elementary	8,646	9.3	8,489	9.1	93,386
Middle	5,895	12.8	3,306	7.2	46,003
High	5,087	7.4	11,765	17.2	68,421
Center	212	4.7	3,085	68.6	4,497
Multi	776	10.7	1,019	14.1	7,247

ATTENDANCE CATEGORIES IN 2019-20

Passed by Congress in 2015, the federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), replaces No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). States must include five indicators of school quality, four on academic achievement, and a fifth, non-academic measure. Many states chose chronic absenteeism as the fifth indicator (Jordan & Miller, 2017). Florida’s ESSA plan requires school districts to implement an early warning system which identifies students in K-8 who may need additional support to succeed in school. As part of the early warning system, attendance must be included (Florida Department of Education, 2018).

Broward online status data for the 2019-20 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attenders (0 – 4.9% absences); At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences); Chronic Absenteeism (10 – 19.9% absences); and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (27.7%), followed by elementary (29.7%), high (41.5%), multi-level (47.8%), and centers (78.1%). Of the 104,506 students categorized as at risk, chronic, or severely chronic and enrolled during physical attendance 52,963 (50.7%) were also classified at risk, chronic, or severely chronic during physical attendance of the 2019-20 school year.

Figure 3 and Appendix D compare the attendance categories for online attendance with the attendance categories for physical attendance, broken down by school level. All the school levels had a greater proportion of chronic and severe chronic absenteeism during online schooling than during physical schooling. The differences in combined chronic and severe chronic absenteeism between online and physical attendance was greatest for multi-level (28.5%), followed by high (18.9%), middle (17.0%), elementary (15.9%) and centers (3.5%).

Figures 4a, 4b, 4c, and Appendix E compare the attendance categories for online attendance with the attendance categories for physical attendance, broken down by grade level. All grade levels had a greater proportion of chronic and severe chronic absenteeism during online schooling than during physical schooling. The differences in combined chronic and severe chronic absenteeism between online and physical attendance were greatest for 9th grade students (22.7%) and 11th grade students (21.9%) while the differences between online and physical attendance were smallest for 12th grade students (8.2%) and 4th grade students (11.7%).

It is important to note that percentage of days missed for online attendance is affected by the low number of days in membership (average 42 days). Although a greater percent of students were categorized as chronic or severely chronic during virtual attendance than during physical attendance, the online chronic or severely chronic group had an average of 13 missed days and the physical attendance chronic or severely chronic group averaged 22 missed days.

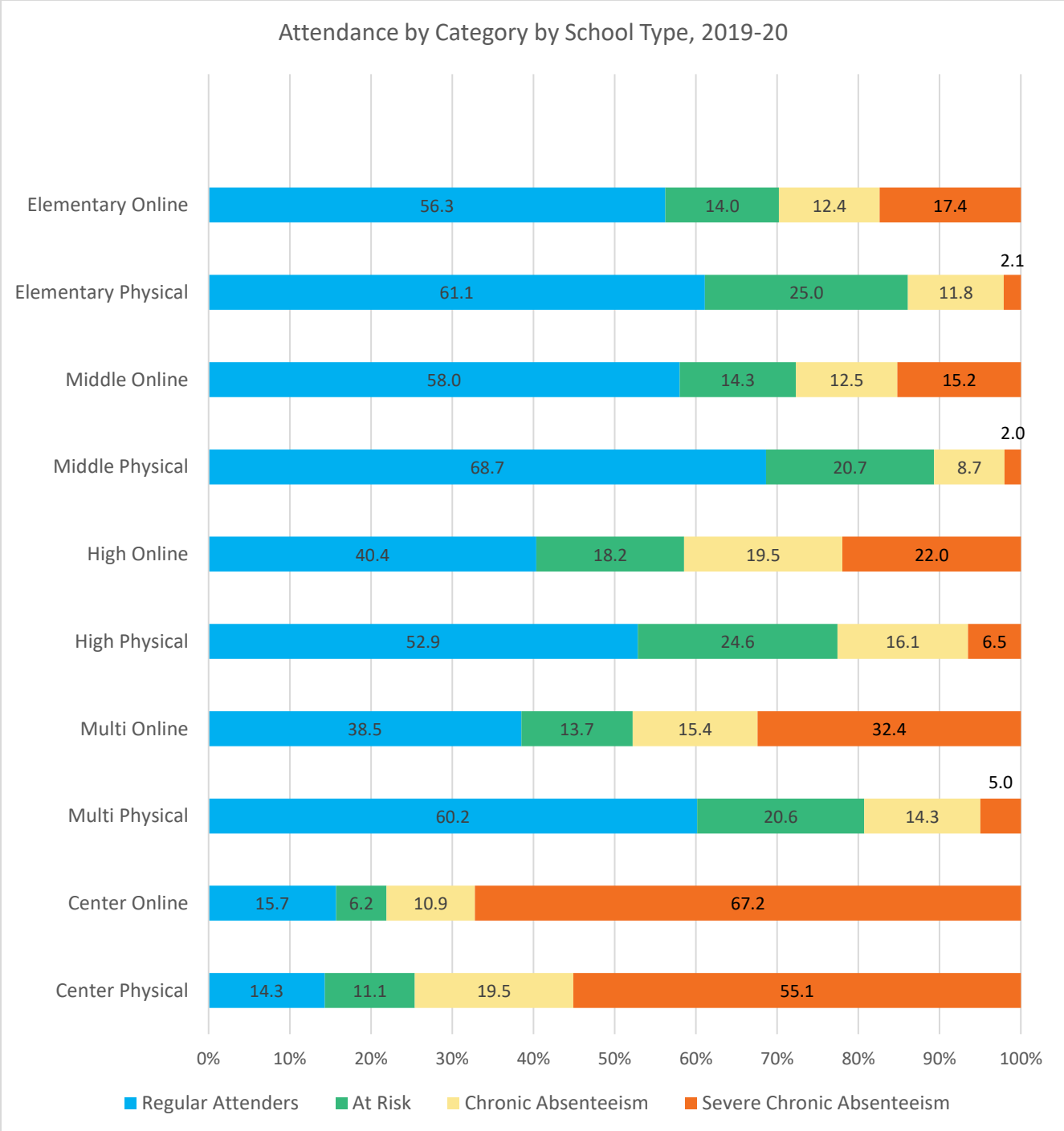


Figure 3. Percent of students absent by school level and attendance category for the 2019-20 school year.

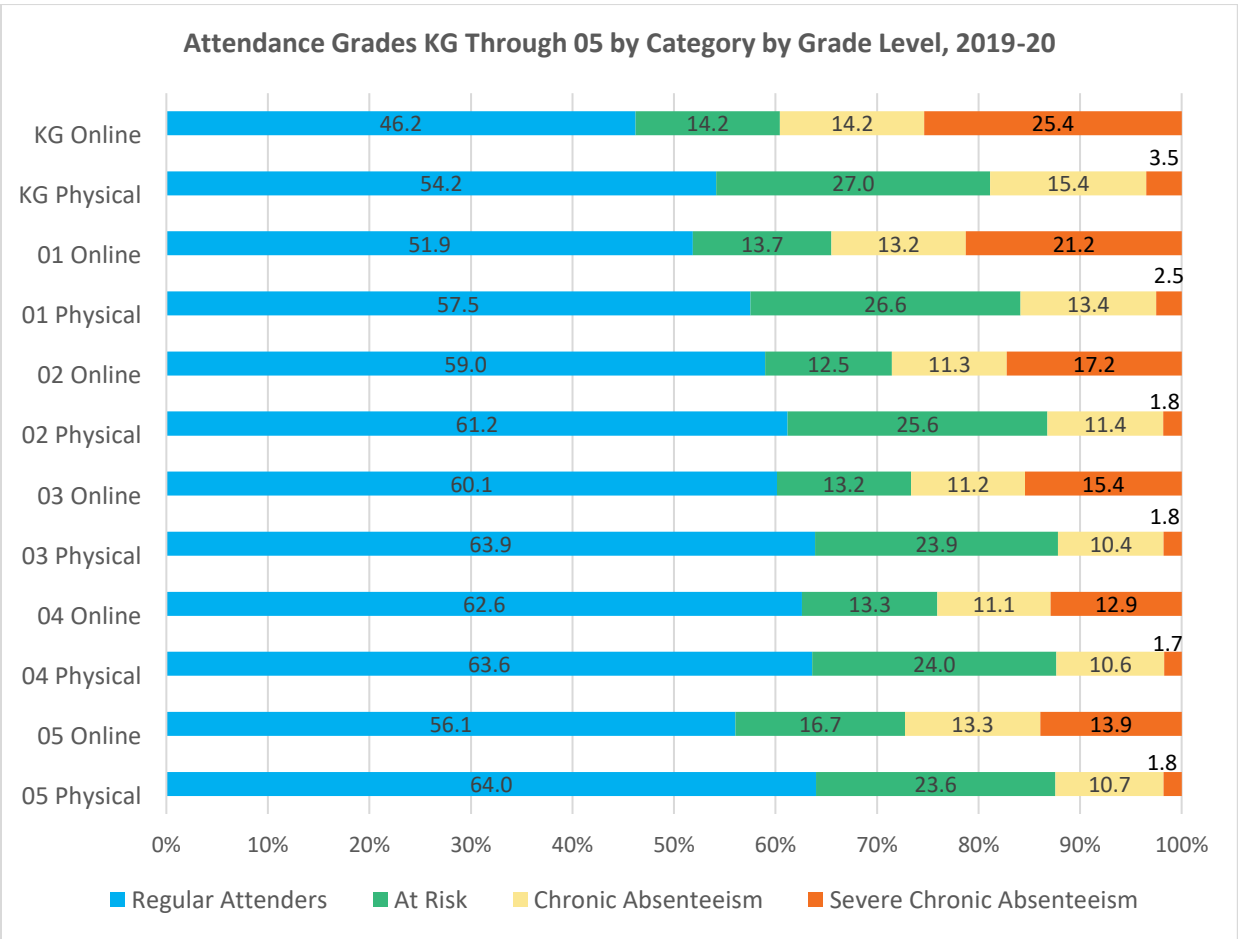


Figure 4a. Percent of students grades KG through 05 by grade level and attendance category for the 2019-20 school year.

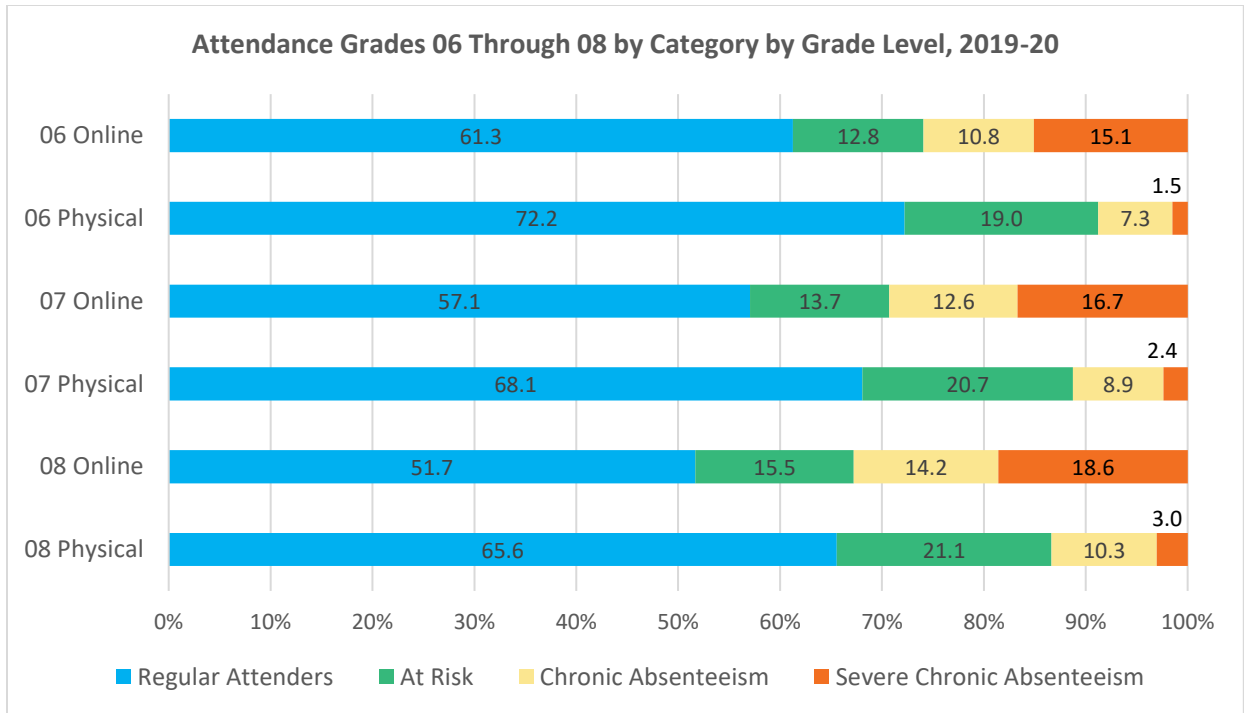


Figure 4b. Percent of students grades 06 through 08 by grade level and attendance category for the 2019-20 school year.

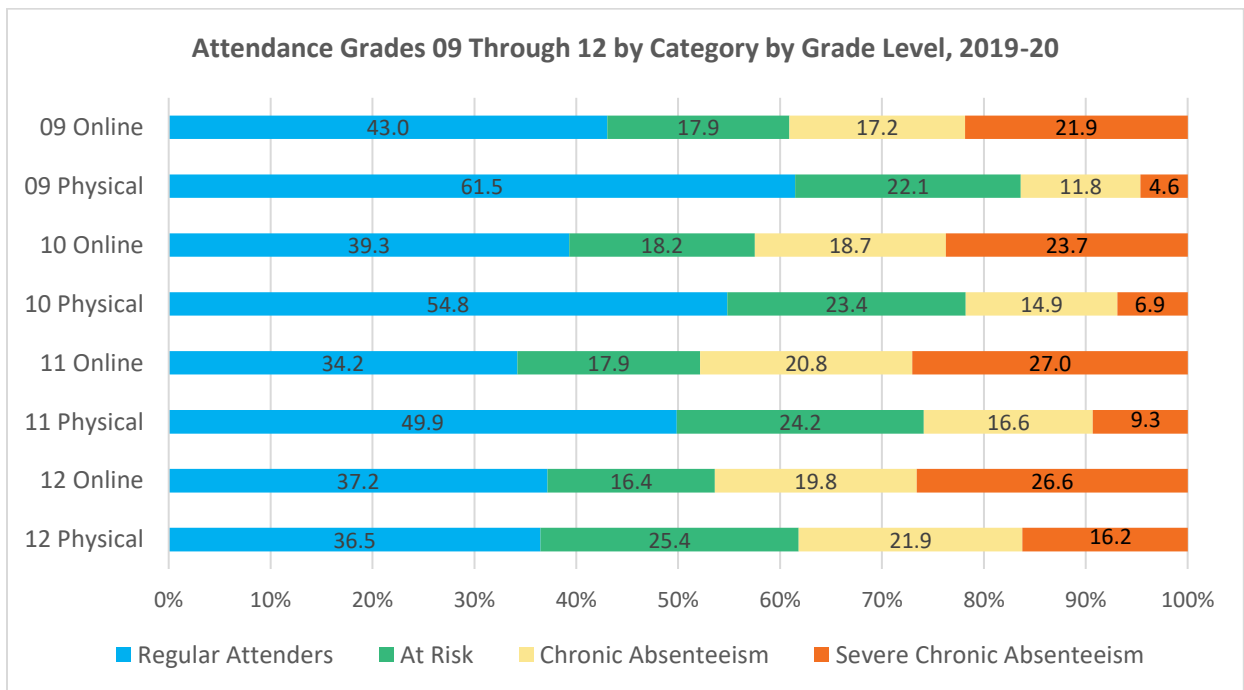


Figure 4c. Percent of students grades 09 through 12 by grade level and attendance category for the 2019-20 school year.

Discussion

Due to the coronavirus outbreak early in 2020, schools closed through the end of the school year. This discussion provides additional historical context for the events leading up to schools closing for face-to-face instruction, a transition to online learning for 100% of the student population, and interventions to support access to education while addressing barriers related to technology.

Worldwide Pandemic

There were no known cases of the coronavirus in Florida until March 1, 2020. On March 11, 2020, the NBA suspended the regular basketball season. The World Health Organization labeled the coronavirus a pandemic the same day.

Friday, March 13, 2020 would be the last day students and teachers would meet in their classrooms together before physical schools closed for the remainder of the 19/20 school year. At the onset of the pandemic, public health professionals knew that the COVID-19 virus could be transmitted through the air by breathing and was already known to be a deadly virus with no existing vaccine or effective treatment for hospitalized patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed mitigation guidelines to help “flatten the curve” of rising cases of COVID-19 and control the spread of disease.

Learning Never Closes

The 2020 spring break was planned for the week of March 23-27 with only 2.5 school days the previous week. From the moment schools considered closing, the Broward community began planning for an alternative to the traditional face-to-face learning experience.

Vendors working with BCPS responded immediately to help with solutions for online learning. Canvas, a learning management system, had been used primarily at the secondary levels, with teachers at all levels using the platform to provide supplemental learning materials and activities in the face-to-face classroom. Canvas transformed into a primary delivery system for connecting students with learning. Microsoft had already developed a remote meeting platform, termed Microsoft Teams, that could host several attendees to serve as a virtual classroom. Microsoft continually added or modified features of this product to intuitively meet the needs of teachers, large meetings, and virtual town halls or Parent University meetings with stakeholders.

Staff across the District shifted priorities to address the immediate impacts of moving from face-to-face instruction to online learning. Anticipated impacts of the shutdown on the community included establishing access to technology (computer devices and internet connectivity), the District’s Food & Nutrition Services planned for and provided grab-n-go meals for families, and the Innovative Learning Department provided online training for all teachers to learn how to use Canvas and connect with their students online.

Attendance Recordkeeping and Interventions

Knowing that access to technology was paramount during a time when all families and schools had to adapt to the reality of a worldwide pandemic, District leadership determined that student attendance would be monitored for teachers through online learning systems by District offices and recorded directly into the District's Student Information System. This adaptation relieved teachers of the responsibility of recording attendance in a new system where finding evidence of attendance or participation for each student would have been overwhelming. The District adopted a new attendance code that served to identify if a student's attendance could be verified (V) through login data in the student portal known as Clever, and the learning management system, Canvas. The V-code did not count as an absence against the student, which would have triggered truancy consequences for many students in an already difficult situation for most families.

Daily notifications were delivered by voice message and email to parents of all students identified by District offices without a verified login. Notifications included the student's name, date of absence, directions to ensure daily student logins would be counted, hyperlinks to the District's Attendance Information website for frequently asked questions, and information about contacting their school if the student was in need of a computer device or internet service.

An attendance dashboard was created to help the community monitor average daily logins throughout the District. The attendance/login dashboard was available at browardschools.com/attendance through the end of June 2020.

Throughout the 4th quarter in spring of 2020 with 100% online learning, the BCPS Attendance Office, School Applications Department in the Information Technology Division, and the Student Assessment & Research Department worked together daily to: record student attendance/logins in the Student Information System; update the attendance dashboard; deliver daily absence notifications through ParentLink; and provide spreadsheets to schools for absent students to be contacted by staff.

Spring Attendance Slump and a Pandemic

The Spring Attendance Slump, also known as the "Spring slide," refers to the weeks before and after a school's spring break when drops in attendance are common. The shift to warmer temperatures, longer daylight hours, thoughts of days off, asthma, allergies, and other health problems can make attendance plummet. In Broward, these drops in attendance are seen mostly in the last 5 weeks of the school year.

Data and equity issues suggest that the spring attendance slump has correlations to additional metrics and demographics. These include, but are not limited to:

- Family income (Free/reduced lunch (FRL) vs. non-FRL),
- English as a second language in the home,
- Limited Internet options in some communities,
- Serious illness or death of a family member,

- geographic location & race,
- and generational trauma.

Among students who were chronically absent before the pandemic, family income was a known correlative risk factor for attendance. Throughout the pandemic, average daily attendance for students with FRL status was 8% lower than students with non-FRL status. Prior to the pandemic, the difference in average daily attendance between FRL and non-FRL was only 0.7% (see Appendix C).

The appendices in this brief will help shed light on patterns of attendance throughout the District. As a leading indicator, attendance correlates to academic outcomes for individual students and overall school letter grades. The Student Services Department houses the majority of the District's mental health staff to assist students who have been referred for attendance, in addition to other reasons, with attendance leading the frequency of reasons for referral in most areas of the county. School Social Workers and Family Therapists are keenly aware that attendance as a reason for referral is often an early indicator of other underlying issues that contribute to student absences. As this District continues to manage recovery from major traumatic events, the State of Florida has continued to provide financial support to increase the availability of mental health services to all of our students. Interventions from school counselors, school social workers, family therapists, and other disciplines to support students and families, have a measurable impact on underlying causes of absences resulting in improved attendance.

Summary

The average daily attendance (ADA) rate was lower for all school types for online attendance than it was for physical attendance in 2019-20. Districtwide the average daily online attendance rate (87.1%) was 7 percentage points lower than the physical ADA rate (94.1%).

There was a gap between the race/ethnicities, as well as between FRL and non-FRL, ELL and non-ELL, and SWD and non-SWD students in terms of the online ADA, with White students attending at a higher rate than Hispanic or Black students, non-FRL students attending at a higher rate than FRL students, non-ELL students attending at a higher rate than ELL students, and non-SWD students attending at a higher rate than SWD students. These differences were specific to the months of online schooling in 2019-20; there were no significant differences in the ADA rates between these groups for the months that students were physically in school.

The average number of days absent was higher during the months students were physically in school than it was for the months students were attending virtually. This difference is due in large part to the fact that there were many more days students were attending physically than virtually. Similarly, online attendance had a higher percentage of perfect attendance and a lower percentage of students absent 15 or more days than did physical attendance, also in part because students attended fewer days virtually than they did physically.

For all school types the proportion of students with chronic and severe chronic absenteeism was higher during online attendance than during physical attendance. The largest difference between online and physical attendance occurred at multi-level schools. At all grade levels the proportion of students with chronic and severe chronic absenteeism was higher during online attendance than during physical attendance. The greatest difference between online and physical attendance was for 9th grade students and the smallest difference between online and physical attendance was for 12th grade students.

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