

FAMILY LEAGUE

OF BALTIMORE

THE PROBLEM:

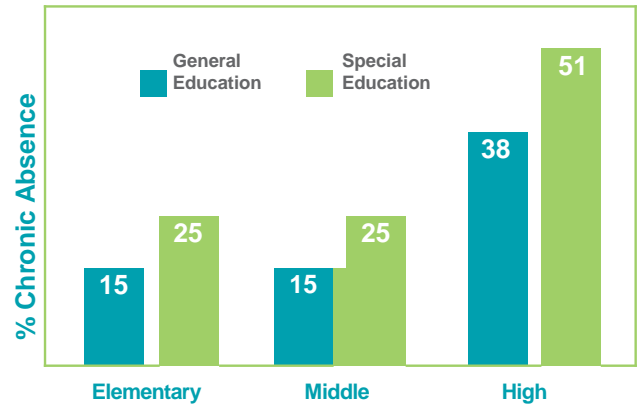
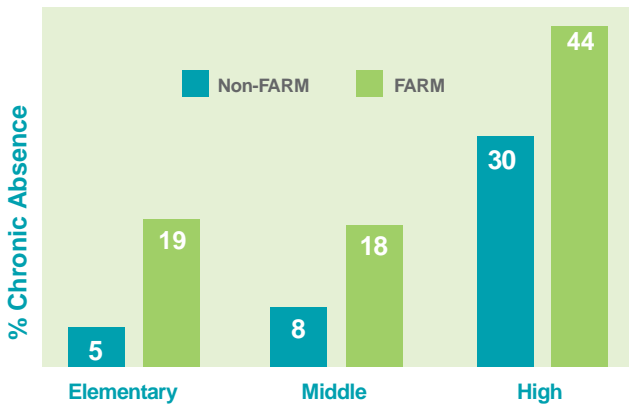
In SY13-14 over 17,500 students were chronically absent* in Baltimore City Public Schools.

In Baltimore this equates to:

- Poorer school climate,
- Lower graduation rates,
- A reduction in course credit accumulation and
- Lower test scores.

* Data from MSDE and chronic absence is defined by a student missing 20 days or more from school

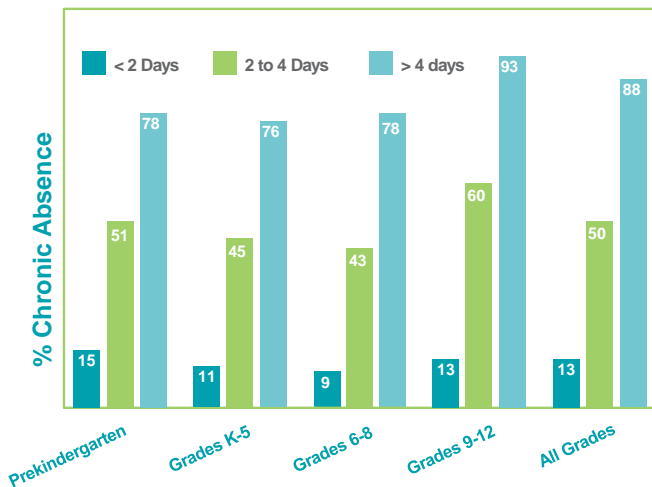
Students who qualify for **Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS)** and **students with disabilities** are *more likely* to be **chronically absent***.



Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) has shown chronic absence in the first year of school predicts later chronic absence. Pre-K and K students who are chronically absent are:

- 2-3 times more likely to be retained before third grade
- More often identified for special education services
- Lower performing on assessments

BERC research demonstrates the compounding impact September absences have on chronic absenteeism.



- » Students who miss **2 or more days** of school in September are significantly **more likely to be chronically absent by the end of the school year.**
- » Baltimore students who **missed 2-4 days of school in September** were **5 times as likely to be chronically absent.**
- » Students who **missed 5 or more days of school in September** were **16 times as likely to be chronically absent.**

FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Over the past five years Baltimore City Public Schools along with Family League and the Baltimore Attendance Collaborative has bolstered its efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism by creating:

- A heightened awareness and understanding of chronic absenteeism among district and school leadership,
- A new at risk for chronic absence measure (ARCA) that helps schools identify students who are at risk of chronic absence in an effort to provide effective interventions before the student actually becomes chronically absent,
- An attendance framework to help guide schools in their efforts to improve attendance, and
- A revised uniform policy to eliminate uniforms as a barrier to attendance.

These efforts have been **fundamental** to the **foundation necessary** to **reduce chronic absenteeism**. We have a long way to go, but this is the time to keep the momentum going by providing the information and supports to schools so they have the tools to address the barriers prohibiting so many of Baltimore's youth from attending school every day.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS: Recommendations for Continued Improvement

1. Continue to use chronic absenteeism as a measure of attendance and indicator of school success
2. Maintain Baltimore City Public School's capacity to provide technical assistance, data and data analysis support to schools
3. Impress upon Principals the importance of reducing chronic absenteeism as a key indicator of school success

Performance improves as attendance improves! *Students who start with good attendance maintain good attendance.*