



## EQUITY DATA SNAPSHOT

# EARLY WARNINGS IN NEW YORK CITY

## Initial data on student attendance show NYC schools are struggling to engage historically underserved groups of students

New data reveal that as the school year began in September, New York City's district-run schools disproportionately failed to engage Black and Latinx students, English learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness — the same groups of students who were also underserved when the pandemic forced schools to close in the spring.

This limited data on student attendance during the first two days of the school year — September 16-17 — covers an orientation period when all students were expected to learn remotely, and were made public after the City Council subpoenaed the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). While incomplete, the data provide a narrow but important glimpse at one of the most critical needs facing our education system: ensuring that all students receive quality instruction each day whether they are learning remotely, in person, or through a blend of the two.

The newly released attendance data highlight how the lack of equity-driven student engagement by our education system this fall can worsen pre-existing inequities. The data — and the City Council's difficulty obtaining it — also underscore the need for greater public transparency.

These challenges are not limited to New York City. They are statewide issues that require both state and local solutions.

The ability of policymakers, educators, parents, and other stakeholders to identify and address the opportunity gaps in our education system is limited by the lack of public statewide data on critical issues like student attendance, the availability of personal learning devices and high-speed internet access, and the amount of live instruction for students who rely on remote learning — which includes approximately half of students statewide and a disproportionate share of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

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**The early data show that New York City schools failed to engage nearly 1 in 4 students during the first two days of the school year — with significant disparities for historically underserved students and some schools not reporting data.**

NYCDOE schools that submitted attendance data marked an average of 23% of students absent on September 16-17, compared to approximately 10% of students absent during the first two days of the prior school year. Ed Trust–NY's analysis points to the need for City and school leaders to do more to engage historically underserved groups of students during this critical time.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY BOROUGH

Bronx

**28%**

marked absent

Brooklyn

**24%**

marked absent

Queens

**22%**

marked absent

Manhattan

**17%**

marked absent

Staten Island

**17%**

marked absent

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GRADE LEVEL

All schools

Black students

**29%**

marked absent

Latinx students

**26%**

marked absent

Asian students

**18%**

marked absent

White students

**16%**

marked absent

Elementary and middle schools

Black students

**26%**

marked absent

Latinx students

**23%**

marked absent

Asian students

**16%**

marked absent

White students

**13%**

marked absent

High schools

Black students

**32%**

marked absent

Latinx students

**32%**

marked absent

White students

**23%**

marked absent

Asian students

**21%**

marked absent

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY HOUSING STATUS

Students experiencing homelessness

**34%**

marked absent

Housing secure students

**22%**

marked absent

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS

English learners

**34%**

marked absent

Not English learners

**21%**

marked absent

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY DISABILITY STATUS

Students with disabilities

**28%**

marked absent

General education students

**22%**

marked absent

Source: New York City Department of Education data provided to the City Council and released on October 15, 2020 (downloaded from [the link in this release](#)). Attendance is defined as participation in asynchronous or synchronous instruction. The data included in this analysis represents approximately 76% of all district-run schools in New York City, enrolling 78% of all students in New York City district-run schools in 2019-20. The original data file includes suppression whenever the number of students attending or not attending is fewer than 5 students. If a school includes data on students attending, but suppresses data on students not attending (or vice versa), we assume the suppressed number is 4 (the upper boundary of the suppression rule), which provides the most conservative estimate of the share of students not attending. Approximately 11% of schools were excluded due to suppressed or otherwise missing data and an additional 13% of schools were not included in the data set.