DISTRICT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN



2026-2027

BOARD APPROVED: NOVEMBER 20, 2026

District Attendance Improvement Plan

November 2026 through May 2027

2026–2027 school year | Revised November 2, 2026

Commitment to Student Attendance

The Yazoo City Municipal School District is committed to improving student attendance by creating a positive attendance culture, strengthening partnerships with families, identifying students at risk of chronic absenteeism early, and providing timely, tiered interventions while complying with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requirements.

This operating plan directs the district's remaining-year attendance work. Schools will maintain required student interventions, select no more than two improvement actions per 30-day cycle, and use existing records and meetings to determine whether support improves attendance. Supporting evidence and optional strategies appear in the appendices.

Purpose and district commitment

The Yazoo City Municipal School District is committed to improving student attendance by creating a positive attendance culture, strengthening partnerships with families, identifying students at risk of chronic absenteeism early, and providing timely, tiered interventions while complying with Mississippi Department of Education requirements.

District vision: Make each scholar a success story. Attendance work supports access to rigorous instruction, social emotional development, and college and career opportunities.

School and district goals

School or district	Chronically absent	MDE total	2025–2026 rate	2026–2027 goal
McCoy Elementary School	215	860	25.0%	≤18.8%
Woolfolk Middle School	112	391	28.6%	≤21.5%
Yazoo City High School	374	546	68.5%	≤51.4%
YCMSD district total	701	1,797	39.0%	≤30.0%

Source: MDE Chronic Absenteeism Report for School Year 2025–2026, released September 17, 2026, p. 101 (schools) and p. 18 (district). "MDE total" preserves the denominator reported by MDE. Goals are district-established and are not requirements prescribed by this report.

Maintain the estimated ADA goal of at least 92.0%, compared with the separately labeled historical CNA estimate of 89.3%. Principals review school, grade, and subgroup attendance monthly; the district reviews progress quarterly.

How to use this plan

The operating sections contain priorities, student supports, attendance counting, the intervention timeline, monitoring, roles, and remaining-year milestones. Appendix A retains planning evidence. Appendix B contains tools and support options. Completed startup tasks belong in district records; unfinished items remain on the single completion checklist.

Attendance counting and referral documentation

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

A student who misses 10% or more of their school days, which averages to just two days a month, for any reason, is considered chronically absent. Every absence, excused or unexcused, (including suspensions), is a learning opportunity lost. Chronically absent students are more likely to fall behind academically and less likely to graduate from high school. Addressing chronic absenteeism and developing good attendance habits is a solvable problem for which we all share responsibility.

The district will distinguish between the chronic-absence prevention pathway, which counts all absences (excused and unexcused), and the compulsory-attendance enforcement pathway, which addresses unlawful/unexcused absences. A student may require intensive prevention supports even when absences are excused.

Counting and excuse decisions

For compulsory-attendance purposes, a student meets full-day attendance when present for at least sixty-six percent (66%) of that student's school day. The attendance clerk records actual arrival and departure times and combines late arrival and early checkout when calculating time present. The school's actual daily schedule determines the time for calculation; a districtwide clock-time shortcut shall not override the 66% calculation. The principal or attendance administrator verifies the daily classification before an SAO threshold is reported. [Source: SB 2103, §37-13-91(2)(d), (4)(a); MDE Attendance Playbook, p. 6.]

For an illness- or injury-related absence after the third such absence, a written excuse from a medical provider is required to treat the absence as excused. For compulsory-school-age students, no more than five absences may be excused per semester under the statutory limit unless the superintendent or authorized designee specifically approves additional absences upon a showing of extenuating circumstances. Qualifying school-sanctioned events do not count as absences. Staff apply the adopted local policy for acceptable documentation, due dates, parent notes, privacy, and review of an exception; corrections to absence codes must be completed before referral counts are certified. [Source: SB 2103, §37-13-91(4)(a)(ii), (4)(b); MDE Attendance Playbook, pp. 6, 25–28.]

The attendance clerk maintains distinct counts: all absences, including excused and unexcused absences, for chronic-absence prevention; and verified unlawful absences for compulsory-attendance reporting. An unlawful absence is a day or part of a day without a valid excuse under §37-13-91(4)(a), subject to applicable counting rules. For the MDE flow chart's cumulative attendance-referral count, exclude excused days, Out of School Suspension (OSS) days, and In-school Suspension (ISS) days as instructed by the chart; separately report OSS and expulsions to the SAO when they occur. The district will resolve disputed documentation and retain the resulting coding decision before submitting a referral. [Source: SB 2103, §37-13-91(4), (6); MDE Student Referral Flow Chart, p. 1.]

Referral records and separate reporting

MDE Required referral information: For MDE flow-chart referrals at 5, 8, 12, 15, and every additional five qualifying unexcused days thereafter, the school attendance clerk supplies the student's name, date of birth, MSIS number, grade, gender, parent/guardian name and telephone/home address, verified count excluding excused absences and ISS/OSS from the chart's attendance-referral count, contacts, and interventions. The principal or designee checks the count and documentation; the designated district reporter retains submission time and portal receipt. *Note: See page for the student intervention timeline that documents what occurs at 3 cumulative absences (excused or unexcused) and 4 verified unexcused absences.*

OSS and expulsion: The school's secretary/attendance clerk reports suspensions and expulsions to the SAO when they occur and uploads OSS days to the MDE SAO Referral portal as directed. OSS is not excused, but OSS days are excluded from the MDE flow chart's cumulative attendance-referral threshold count. Keep the suspension or expulsion reporting record separate from the threshold-referral record.

ISS: Students assigned to in-school suspension must not be counted absent.

Nonenrollment reporting

Any student of compulsory school age who has not enrolled in the school they are eligible to attend within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year must be reported to the School Attendance Officer (SAO) by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee no later than the next business day. The designated district reporter retains the referral and portal confirmation. The SAO attempts to secure enrollment through appropriate contact. This non-enrollment pathway is separate from cumulative absences. [Source: SB 2103, §37-13-91(6); MDE Student Referral Flow Chart, p. 1.]

Priority work for the school-wide attendance interventions

Each school maintains the state-required Attendance Improvement Template as its separate school-level document. For each 30-day improvement cycle, the principal must analyze absentee data to determine the subgroup of students on which to focus for improving attendance overall. After identifying the focus subgroup for the month, the principal must use the following four (4) priorities to determine if low attendance in that subgroup is due those mentioned below and used the template to implementation strategies to improve attendance for that subgroup.

- **Priority 1 Physical & Mental Health Supports:** Address physical illness, chronic health conditions, anxiety, depression, and other health barriers affecting attendance by connecting students and families with appropriate care and school supports.
    - **Owner(s):** Parent Liaison and School Nurse, coordinated by the Principal
    - **Each Month:** Review recurring illness-related absences with families; connect appropriate health support, clarify documentation and return-to-school expectations under district policy, and coordinate missed work (as necessary). Respect health needs and use the special education case manager where appropriate. Confirm that support was received and review attendance afterward.
- **Priority 2 School Safety:** Address bullying, threats, conflict, and unsafe conditions at school or while traveling to school so students feel safe attending regularly.
    - **Owner(s):** School Administrators, Campus Police, and Counselor
    - **Each Month:** Implement Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS) with fidelity. Coordinate classroom and small group activities to address bullying, threats, anxiety, depression, and school avoidance. Engage documented individual concerns and assign a trusted adult to act promptly on bullying concerns and safety concerns. Engage Marion Counseling at all schools or Canopy at Woolfolk and the high school when appropriate. Confirm service access and whether the student feels able to attend consistently.
- **Priority 3 Attendance Understanding & Family Communication:** Explain how absences accumulate and affect learning, share each student's attendance information with families, and use two-way communication to identify and resolve barriers.
    - **Owner(s):** School Administrators, Parent Liaison and Attendance Clerk, overseen by the Principal
    - **Each Month:** Communicate personalized absence totals and clear explanations of missed learning. Use existing ParentSquare, letters, calls, and conferences, with translation or interpretation when needed. Communicate requirements, as established by law, for compulsory school attendance.
- **Priority 4 Academic Success and Engagement:** Provide manageable catch-up work, tutoring, and meaningful learning opportunities that help students succeed, feel connected to school, and attend consistently.
    - **Owner(s):** Principal, Teachers, Counselors, and Parent Liaisons
    - **Each Month:** Link attendance support to tutoring, manageable catch-up work, relevant classroom learning, trusted adults, or other meaningful opportunities. Implement a reentry protocol after repeated or extended absences of students.

Transportation, caregiving, basic needs, disability-related needs, and sibling barriers receive targeted support when identified. Urgent health and safety concerns receive immediate attention regardless of priority ranking.

Individual student and family support

Use current attendance to act now

The October-November 2026 survey response file contains 69 non-test responses. Among valid single substantive ratings, 64% rated physical illness or chronic health conditions Major or Very Major; 59% rated students' belief that a few missed days do not matter at that level; 56% rated families' limited awareness of accumulating absences; and 51% rated feeling unsafe. These perceptions support investigation and individualized action, rather than a single explanation for every absence. Full counts and limitations are in Appendix A.

Review Early Warning System (EWS) reports and student attendance weekly, including students approaching 10% absence, returning chronically absent students, and newly enrolled students. Assign a named adult, review prior and current supports, and begin family outreach before five current-year absences when risk is evident. Prior-year totals identify risk and do not carry into current-year referral counts. The completion checklist addresses any outstanding roster reconciliation.

Students with disabilities: Include the student's special education case manager in the attendance review. Examine health needs, accommodations, transportation, delivery of services, and access to instruction; coordinate any needed changes through the appropriate IEP or other student-support process. Special Education (SPED) status alone does not establish an attendance cause or replace an individualized barrier review.

Assign an Individualized Attendance Success Plan (IASP) through the five-absence MTSS/TST (Multi-Tiered System of Support/Teacher Support Team) review or sooner when attendance risk or barriers warrant; each plan will name one adult owner and include a root cause, strengths/ motivators, family input, actions, attendance goal, monitoring cycle, and exit criteria. Students already served through MTSS/TST should have attendance integrated into the existing student plan whenever feasible rather than creating a duplicative parallel plan.

Follow-through: The assigned adult records the support action and confirms whether the family or student connected with the service. Review progress at least biweekly using the existing team routine, current enrolled days, absences since support began, and changes in credits or course performance when relevant. Unresolved barriers are assigned an owner and a correction date.

Coordinate support for siblings

When multiple chronically absent students share a verified household, coordination across the identified schools will be facilitated by the district's School Attendance Counselor (SAC). The SAC, along with the MDE SAO, will coordinate "cross" school attendance reviews to determine if absences are tracked to siblings at other schools in the district.

Each principal will identify a contact at each school who will work with the SAC and SAO to link support services. Consider a joint barrier conference when appropriate and coordinate shared supports. Ask about health, housing, transportation across schools, caregiving, work shifts, just as examples for the discussion. Give each student a private opportunity to identify individual safety, health, emotional, or academic concerns. Document responsibilities and follow-up in existing attendance and MTSS/TST records.

Each student will retain an individual attendance goal, required letters, MTSS/TST review, and applicable SAO reporting. Coordinated outreach does not replace student-specific requirements. The district's SAC participation and admin-calendar requirements apply to these attendance meetings, and she must continue to be copied on every email to Stephanie Bell. Keep family-specific information in restricted student records; public school and district plans will use aggregate findings without caregiver or student names.

Record the family coordinator, participating schools, and shared support status in the existing action log. The coordinator confirms service access and reviews each student's attendance at least biweekly. Principals check overdue follow-up weekly; the district lead reviews unresolved cross-school barriers monthly. Reconcile household analysis totals and verify relationships before using them as dashboard counts.

Required student intervention timeline

The district will use a graduated attendance response. ParentSquare and early family outreach begin in Tier 1. Every student reaching five cumulative absences receives the five-day letter and an MTSS/TST referral for a Tier 2/3 review; the TST decides and documents placement and interventions according to need. Compulsory-attendance referrals occur separately and in parallel when verified unlawful-absence thresholds are reached. Schools use the following owner, deadline, and documentation rules.

Threshold / condition	Required or district response
Daily absence	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Enter and verify attendance each school day; confirm the ParentSquare absence call to the parent/guardian that day; retain the call log and address failed notices. Monitor EWS patterns weekly.
3 cumulative absences (excused or unexcused)	Parent liaison: By the next school day, call the parent/guardian, send the three-day letter, offer a conference to identify barriers, and document the call or attempts, delivery, needs, and next step. Chief Cedric Brown may assist with home delivery.
4 verified unexcused absences	School-based counselor: By the next school day, call the parent/guardian to ask what support is needed; document the conversation or attempts, supports, and follow-up. If contact fails, seek Chief Cedric Brown's assistance and document the result.
5 cumulative absences (excused or unexcused)	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: By the next school day send the five-day letter and file an MTSS/TST referral. Principal: schedule and place a Tier 2/3 review on the admin calendar, including Ms. Coleman. TST: review barriers and prior contacts, offer a family conference, assign owner/goal/supports/follow-up, document the tier decision and attendance success plan. Continue school-based counselor support; consider Marion at all schools and Canopy at Woolfolk and high school as appropriate.
After the five-absence TST review	TST: Determine Tier II or Tier III placement according to student need, intervention response, and applicable MTSS documentation; integrate attendance into an existing student plan if feasible. Review plan progress at least biweekly. TST referral at five absences does not automatically assign a tier.
Insufficient response to Tier II / intensive need	TST: Intensify or consider Tier III support in accordance with MDE procedures, document intervention fidelity and family participation, and coordinate with the school-based counselor and outside providers.
5 verified unlawful absences	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Submit the required SAO portal referral to Stephanie Bell by close of business the next business day after the fifth absence becomes unlawful under district policy. Attach the verified count, demographics, family contacts, and school interventions; retain portal confirmation. Copy the district's SAC on all emails to SAO. TST and counseling support continues.

The timeline continues on the next page. All emails to SAO must copy the district's SAC. Every attendance team and MTSS meeting must be on the admin calendar with the SAC invited.

Continued student intervention timeline

Threshold / condition	Required or district response
8 cumulative qualifying unexcused days on MDE referral count	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Submit an updated SAO portal referral no later than the next business day after the verified threshold and retain receipt; share intervention records. Principal/TST: strengthen interventions, document owner and review date, and coordinate with SAO on prompt home contact and written notice. Eight unlawful absences establish a statutory prima facie case, not an automatic court filing.
12 cumulative qualifying unexcused days on MDE referral count	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Submit an updated SAO portal referral no later than the next business day after the verified threshold; retain receipt. TST: review intervention effectiveness, document changes and results, and continue family engagement and supports.
15 cumulative qualifying unexcused days on MDE referral count	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Submit an updated SAO portal referral no later than the next business day after the verified threshold and provide complete intervention documentation; retain receipt. TST: continue intensive support. Principal: respond to SAO requests for court preparation. Court filing is governed by statutory conditions and SAO action, not automatic at day 15.
Every 5 qualifying unexcused days thereafter (20, 25, 30...)	School Secretary/Attendance Clerk: Submit an updated SAO portal referral no later than the next business day after each verified threshold; retain receipt, current attendance, family-contact, and intervention records.

Decision rule: At five cumulative absences, every student receives the five-day letter, a TST referral, and a documented Tier 2/3 review; placement is based on team findings. At five verified unlawful absences, the district also reports to the SAO by close of business the next business day. The two pathways operate concurrently.

Threshold alignment reflects SB 2103, §37-13-91(2), (4)–(7); the Mississippi Attendance Playbook (August 2026); and the MDE Student Referral Flow Chart (July 2026). The principal and district attendance lead will review portal instructions and state guidance for changes annually.

District coordination

District School Attendance Counselor: Must be invited to and included in every attendance team meeting and every MTSS meeting. The SAC must be copied on every email sent to the MDE SAO. The SAC supports coordination, documentation, follow-through, and district monitoring of attendance cases.

District Coordination Requirement: Every school-level attendance team meeting and every MTSS meeting MUST be entered on the district's administrators' (admin) calendar with the SAC invited. The organizer retains calendar invitations, participant record, meeting notes, and follow-up assignments.

Monitoring and staff responsibilities

Four core monitoring measures

Core monitoring measure	Lead	What leaders review
Required steps completed on time	Attendance clerk and principal	Number completed by the applicable deadline / number due. Review by trigger and school so late SAO reports, missing letters, counselor contacts, or TST reviews remain visible.
Open plans reviewed on time	Assigned adult and TST	Number reviewed by the scheduled date / number due for review. Every active plan names an adult, goal, supports, monitoring date, and exit criteria.
Support connection and barrier follow through	Counselor or family coordinator	For each referral or support action, record connection confirmed, pending, or barrier unresolved in the existing record; assign an owner and next step to unresolved needs.
Attendance outcomes and school action progress	Principal and district attendance lead	Review current absence patterns and chronic-absence rates by school, grade, and subgroup; compare with goals and the measurement note. Report progress on the school's two selected actions and attendance since intervention began.

Use existing review routines

Weekly, the principal and school attendance team review EWS flags, required-step exceptions, overdue follow-up, sibling coordination, and progress on the school's two actions. Assigned adults and TST review active student plans at least biweekly. Monthly, principals provide one concise summary of the four measures, selected actions, and unresolved barriers requiring district help. The district uses its existing quarterly review to assess outcomes, subgroup gaps, capacity, and resource needs.

Clear ownership

Lead	Primary responsibility
Superintendent and Cabinet	Review quarterly outcomes, remove systemic barriers, align resources, and report progress to the board.
District attendance lead	Maintain the dashboard; coordinate cross-school cases; monitor school templates, referral evidence, and unresolved barriers; prepare the concise district summary.
Principal and attendance team	Verify required actions and excuse coding; assign owners; review EWS weekly; oversee same-school family coordination and two school actions.
District SAC	Coordinate support for siblings across schools
MTSS and TST	Complete required five-absence reviews; document tier decisions, integrated supports, goals, owners, and review dates.
Counselors and assigned adults	Complete support calls, private barrier conversations, referrals and service confirmation; review progress with families.
Other support staff	Attendance clerks maintain verified records; liaisons lead outreach; special education staff coordinate access and accommodations; transportation and Campus Police resolve relevant barriers.

Remaining year milestones and completion checks

Verify unfinished startup work once (District)

The district attendance lead coordinates this checklist during the first November review. Completion is not presumed. Record evidence, owner, and a due date for each outstanding item in the existing action log; remove closed tasks from active monitoring while retaining records.

Item to verify	Evidence or remaining action
Board policy checkpoint	Verify adoption and posting against the original November 1 deadline; reconcile parent-note guidance. Retain records and resolve any outstanding item promptly. Continue applicable notice, annual reporting, and policy review duties.
School attendance templates and written plans	Verify each state-required template, grade/subgroup data, required board submission and public posting. Obtain or correct missing items; maintain current plans.
Prior-year roster reconciliation	Reconcile the earlier 618-student working roster with MDE's 701 total; match returning students to current enrollment and assign follow-up for missing cases.
Fall transition handoff	Verify receiving-school enrollment and support assignments for students moving from eighth to ninth grade. Close completed handoffs; resolve remaining gaps.

November through January (School & District)

November: Verify the checklist, address overdue student actions, select two school improvement actions, and confirm support connections. December: Review attendance since support began, family feedback, and action deliverables; refine ineffective supports and plan continuity across the break. January: Review return-from-break patterns and semester needs, check credits and current enrollment, and retain or replace the selected actions using the four core measures.

February through May (School & District)

Continue 30-day action reviews and the established monitoring cycle. Use quarterly district reviews to resolve resource barriers. Before year end, evaluate school goals and student outcomes, document effective supports, prepare transition handoffs, and use findings to revise next year's school and district plans.

Annual evaluation-June (School & District)

After the Director of Technology, Information Systems, & Fixed Assets sends the annual attendance data to each school, the principal will determine if the attendance improved under comparable measures? Were required actions timely? Did supports reach students and remove identified barriers? Which actions improved attendance, engagement, or access to services? What should be retained, redesigned, or discontinued?

Appendix A Planning evidence

These findings explain the priorities and remain reference material. They do not add separate reporting duties. Official school baselines and goals appear once in the operating plan.

Historical CNA attendance data

Indicator	2023	2024	2025
District chronic absenteeism	26.9%	35.8%	37.0%
Estimated ADA as % of enrollment	89.7%	90.9%	89.3%
Students with disabilities - chronic absence	28.5%	39.3%	39.0%
Female students - chronic absence	28.3%	37.5%	38.3%
Black/African American students - chronic absence	26.7%	36.0%	37.3%

Source: YCMSD 2026 Comprehensive Needs Assessment, historical district attendance and chronic-absence figures for 2023–2025. The 37.0% figure is retained as historical context; the official MDE 2025–2026 district baseline in the operating plan is 39.0%. The subgroup figures in this table are historical CNA values, not updated subgroup rates from the new report.

Earlier student roster

School	Identified students	Average total absences	Average unexcused absences
McCoy Elementary School	188	27.4 days	16.2 days
Woolfolk Middle School	100	28.4 days	15.4 days
Yazoo City High School	330	37.7 days	25.8 days

Source: 25–26 Chronically Absent Students Analysis – McCoy, Woolfolk, Yazoo High, sections 1–2. These are figures from the earlier working roster, retained for case review; use the official MDE baseline table above for school and district rates and counts.

Priority concentrations: McCoy kindergarten (38 students) and first grade (51) accounted for 89 of 188 identified students, or 47.3%. Woolfolk eighth grade included 42 identified students, averaging 30.7 absences. At the high school, ninth grade included 108 identified students and eleventh grade included 100; eleventh graders averaged 41.0 absences. Across the three-school roster, 103 students were identified as SPED. These historical grades guide follow-up with the same students in their current schools and grades, including the middle-to-high-school transition.

Historical and current records: Prior-year totals identify risk and do not carry forward into current-year attendance-referral counts. Review historical records using absence dates, semester totals, valid excuses, approved exceptions, and applicable-year requirements. Annual excused totals alone do not establish a semester-limit violation. Reconcile the earlier working roster and its summary averages against the underlying records and the MDE report before using those averages in a dashboard.

The high school accounts for 374 of the district's 701 chronically absent students (53.4%), supporting intensive credit and graduation follow-up alongside prevention at elementary and middle school.

Appendix A Climate and safety evidence

Indicator	2024-2025	2025-2026	Attendance significance
Student relationships composite	2.85	2.63	Declining adult/peer connection may reduce motivation to attend.
Student emotional safety composite	2.67	2.46	Lower belonging/social acceptance may contribute to school avoidance.
Student physical safety composite	2.50	2.26	Safety concerns may contribute directly to staying home.
Student bullying/cyberbullying composite	2.67	2.36	Bullying, peer conflict, and online harassment may drive avoidance.
Student mental health composite	2.77	2.53	Stress and limited coping/support may interfere with attendance.
Student substance-abuse safety composite	2.85	2.51	Substance-use environment may contribute to disengagement and absence.
Students reporting no counselor/therapist help when needed	18.1%	27.1%	Indicates a growing access/follow-through gap for students seeking help.
Students who would not know what to do when very sad/stressed/lonely/depressed	5.5%	17.7%	Signals increased uncertainty about how to access support.
Students afraid to get help when very sad/stressed/lonely/depressed	3.9%	11.5%	Help-seeking stigma/fear may leave attendance barriers unresolved.
Staff with no trauma-informed training	73.3%	68.5%	Limited trauma-informed capacity may reduce early identification of avoidance and stress-related barriers.

Source: YCMSD School Climate and Safety Survey, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. Survey means use a 1-4 scale where higher scores indicate more favorable perceptions.

Survey scope and interpretation note: The Project AWARE student findings represent respondents from Woolfolk Middle School and Yazoo City High School. Student participation increased from 181 to 487, and the high school share of respondents changed from 88.4% to 43.4% between 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. Combined year-to-year differences may reflect changes in respondent composition as well as changes in perceptions. Do not generalize these results to elementary students or assume that both secondary schools changed equally. Use the findings as potential attendance barriers to investigate through school-level evidence and student and family conversations, rather than as proven causes of absenteeism. (YCMSD Project AWARE Culture-Climate Survey, p. 8.)

The CNA also identifies economic and family instability, academic difficulty, disability-related access needs, staffing capacity, and service access as potential contributors. Staff confirm barriers for individual students rather than treating historical or survey patterns as a diagnosis.

Appendix A Root cause survey evidence

The response file available November 2, 2026 contains 70 submissions dated September 28–October 22, 2026. Excluding one clearly labeled test submission leaves 69 responses: 38 Student, 18 Parent/Guardian, 7 Teacher, 4 Other School/District Staff, and 2 Student, Parent/Guardian. These are respondent perceptions of contributors to absence; they do not establish prevalence or causes among all chronically absent students.

The following percentages use Major or Very Major ratings divided by the number of single, substantive ratings for each item. Exclude Don't Know and multiple-rating cells for that item; percentages are rounded to whole numbers. Denominators therefore vary.

Reported barrier	Major or Very Major / valid ratings	Percent
Physical illness or chronic health conditions	41 / 64	64%
Students believe missing a few days does not matter	37 / 63	59%
Families may not realize how quickly absences accumulate	35 / 62	56%
Feeling unsafe at school	32 / 63	51%
Depression or other mental-health concerns	30 / 61	49%
Bullying or cyberbullying	31 / 64	48%
Fear of fighting, threats, or violence	30 / 63	48%
Low grades or repeated academic failure	31 / 66	47%
Students are not interested in school	29 / 62	47%
Anxiety, stress, or feeling overwhelmed	28 / 64	44%

Requested actions reinforce the priorities: 34 respondents selected addressing bullying and safety, 33 more engaging and relevant learning, and 28 improved parent-school communication. These are selections, not a strict top-three ranking; 22 respondents selected more than three actions. Comments also identify illness, parent work schedules, shortened-day transportation, caregiving, bullying, anxiety, and academic stress.

Use the findings to guide investigation and support. School labels are inconsistent and do not support reliable school-level rankings. Responses cannot be reliably linked to the sibling roster. Transportation, basic needs, and caregiving still require targeted support when verified, even where overall ratings are lower. Urgent safety or health concerns receive immediate response regardless of survey ranking. Source: YCMSD Chronic Absenteeism Root Cause Survey (Responses), file as of November 2, 2026, Form Responses 1, questions 3–10.

How the evidence informs school actions

District attendance records, the CNA, Project AWARE findings, and the November 2026 root cause survey guide investigation of barriers. The district will emphasize four improvement priorities: health-related absence and access to support; safety, bullying, and emotional support; understanding the cumulative impact of absence; and academic success and engagement. Teams will confirm each student's barriers through student and family input and current records, assign an adult and practical support, and examine whether access to support and attendance improve. Family, transportation, disability-related, and sibling needs will be addressed within these priorities as identified.

Appendix B Barrier screening and support options

Use these options within existing conferences and student plans. Select supports for the verified barrier; the list is not a requirement to launch every activity.

Barrier category	Questions / evidence to explore
Transportation	Is transportation unreliable? Are route, timing, vehicle, or safety issues affecting arrival?
Housing / basic needs	Are housing instability, utilities, food, clothing, or other basic needs interfering with attendance?
Physical health	Are illness, chronic conditions, appointments, medication, or access to medical documentation affecting attendance?
Disability / IEP-related need	Are accommodations, transportation, health plans, sensory needs, or special education services affecting access?
Mental health / school avoidance	Does the student feel anxious, depressed, overwhelmed, withdrawn, or distressed as school approaches?
Bullying / cyberbullying / peer conflict	Are bullying, rumors, harassment, conflict, or identity/disability-related teasing affecting willingness to attend?
Physical safety	Does the student feel unsafe at school or going to/from school? Are threats, fighting, theft, weapons, or dating violence concerns present?
School belonging / adult relationships	Does the student feel known, cared for, accepted, and connected to at least one trusted adult?
Academic difficulty / credit status	Does the student feel unsuccessful, behind, unable to keep up, or off track for promotion/graduation?
Substance-use concern	Is substance use, vaping, alcohol/drug exposure, or related peer influence contributing to absence or disengagement?
Family responsibilities	Are caregiving, work, sibling care, court, family health, or other responsibilities affecting attendance?
Trauma / stress	Has the student experienced trauma, grief, crisis, violence, displacement, or significant stress that may affect attendance?
Attendance misconception	Does the family understand how absences accumulate, that excused absences count toward chronic absence, and how attendance affects learning?

Appendix B Support resources and practical options

Barrier / asset area	Existing or prospective resource	Attendance use
Family communication	ParentSquare, phone/text/email, parent liaisons, conferences, home visits	Use existing trust to shift toward individualized problem solving.
Mental health / counseling	Marion Counseling Services; Canopy Children's Solutions; district counselors; other local providers	Warm handoffs, re-entry support, school-avoidance response, follow-up.
Academic support	MTSS/TST, tutoring/intervention blocks, CTE and graduation pathways	Connect attendance with academic recovery, credits, and relevance.
Transportation	District Transportation Department and community partners as available	Identify route/logistics barriers and create documented solutions.
Health / medical access	School nurse, telehealth/health partners as available	Reduce health-related absence barriers and improve documentation access.
Safety / bullying response	Administrators, counselors, Campus Police, student-support teams	Coordinate safety plans, conflict resolution, bullying response, and safe re-entry.
Basic needs / family stability	Community, faith-based, local business, and social-service partners	Support housing, food, clothing, utilities, and other barriers when identified.
Attendance enforcement / case management	School Attendance Officer and district attendance staff	Coordinate statutory responsibilities without replacing prevention supports.

Options school actions

Schools may use PBIS recognition of improved and consistent attendance, mentoring or Check-In/Check-Out, relevant instruction, tutoring and credit recovery, flexible family conferences, translated outreach, appropriate home visits, or targeted staff coaching. Avoid recognition that shames students with health, disability, or family barriers. Strengthen trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice through existing professional learning when needed.

For McCoy, review early-grade health, childcare, transportation, morning routines, and family understanding. For Woolfolk and the high school, connect attendance to trusted adults, safe reentry, course success, credits, and graduation pathways. Confirm support access and review whether attendance improves before expanding an action.

Prepare for next year through existing reviews

Use spring review to update the resource directory, transition handoffs, staff responsibilities, and next year's startup sequence. Retain evidence of completed 2026 fall tasks without carrying them forward as open obligations.

Appendix C Beginning of Year Attendance Planning Checklist

For annual planning—confirm dates and requirements before each school year. Use this checklist to prepare for 2027–2028 and subsequent years. These startup actions support next year's planning; the November–May operating sections continue to direct current-year work.

Use the existing action log. For each numbered action below, enter a named owner, an exact target date within the planning window, completion status (not started, in progress, complete, or follow-up needed), and a link or location for completion evidence. The district attendance lead coordinates the checklist and resolves outstanding items with principals through existing meetings. No separate tracking form or additional recurring meeting is required.

Before school opens

Action	Lead owner	Completion evidence
1 Review current MDE guidance, attendance counting, referral instructions, and adopted district policies. Update procedures and identify any required approvals or changes.	District attendance lead with superintendent or designee	Dated review; updated procedures; approval records where applicable.
2 Obtain the current state school template. Update parent letters, communication materials, school calendars, and counting instructions for actual daily schedules.	District attendance lead and principals	Current template and materials; verified school schedules.
3 Confirm staff roles, reporter access, school and cross-school family coordinators, counseling contacts, and referral partnerships.	Principals and district attendance lead	Current assignments, access verification, and resource directory.
4 Train attendance clerks, liaisons, counselors, administrators, and relevant MTSS staff on counting, intervention timelines, documentation, family engagement, and coordination.	District attendance lead and principals	Training materials, participation records, and resolved procedure questions.

Before opening through the first 10 school days

Action	Lead owner	Completion evidence
5 Match the prior-year chronically absent roster to current enrollment and grades. Reconcile differences and identify returning students for early support.	Attendance clerk and principal	Reconciled roster; unresolved enrollment or data issues assigned for follow-up.
6 Verify sibling and caregiver connections and transition handoffs, including eighth to ninth grade. Assign a named adult and begin family outreach before escalation.	Principal and district attendance lead for cross-school cases	Verified receiving school, student owner, family coordinator where needed, and initial outreach record.

Appendix C First Month and First Quarter Actions

First 30 school days

Action	Lead owner	Completion evidence
7 Establish school, grade, and subgroup baselines and aligned goals using the latest available data. Label year, denominator, and attendance measure.	Principal with district attendance lead	Verified baseline and goals in the school template; measurement note.
8 Complete or update school attendance plans using the current state template. Verify applicable board submission, public posting, policy, and notice requirements against current guidance.	Principal and superintendent or designee	Completed templates; submission and posting records; dated outstanding-item list.
9 Verify daily notices, required contacts and letters, TST reviews, referral access, and coordination using actual records. Correct failures promptly; student duties apply from opening day.	Principal and attendance staff	Reviewed records and documented corrections; required referral receipts.
10 Select no more than two school improvement actions for the first 30-day cycle. Use prior evidence and early student and family feedback to define the deliverable and review date.	Principal and school attendance team	Two actions or fewer, each with lead, deliverable, target date, and review date in the existing log.

First quarter

Action	Lead owner	Completion evidence
11 Use existing conferences and student conversations to confirm barriers. Conduct a broader root cause survey only when existing evidence needs refreshing or important gaps remain.	Principal, counselors, and family engagement staff	Brief findings linked to school or student supports; survey rationale if used.
12 Confirm access to supports and review attendance since intervention began. Adjust ineffective actions and review the four core measures through existing school and district routines.	Assigned adults, principal, and district attendance lead	Service confirmation, progress review, and documented continue, modify, or exit decisions.

Annual planning safeguards

Confirm the coming year's legal and MDE deadlines before assigning dates. The November 1, 2026 policy checkpoint is a historical deadline; do not carry it forward as an assumed annual requirement. Retain completed adoption and posting records and schedule the policy reviews and reports that remain applicable.

Use prior-year history to identify risk, while maintaining separate current-year attendance and referral counts. Verify household relationships before linking sibling cases, and keep student and family details in restricted records. Completed startup actions should be closed in the log with evidence retained; ongoing interventions and service follow-up continue throughout the school year.