

DESCRIPTION

School attendance rates are a significant factor for high school graduation. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) classifies three levels of attendance. An attendance level of 94.5- 100 percent for a given school year is considered low risk for dropping out, and is the attendance-goal for all schools. The moderate risk classification is 89- 94.4 percent attendance, and the highest risk for dropping out of school is 89 percent or lower attendance for a given school year per student.¹

HOW WE ARE DOING

Over an eight-year period, Ramsey County's public schools have an average attendance of 94.4 percent per student; just on the cusp of the MDE low risk category. Average rates of attendance drop around grade 5, and reach their lowest point during the senior year of high school for most students. By grade 12, attendance rates for students in Ramsey County were 88.7 percent in 2016. This is 5.8 percentage points below the Minnesota target and 6.5 percentage points below the attendance rate of elementary school students in Ramsey County.²

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Minnesota Department of Education: Increase the average public school student attendance rate by year

Minnesota Target: 94.5%-100%

DISPARITIES

School attendance rates by grade tend to decrease after grade 5, and then decline rapidly once a student reaches 9th grade. The rates continuously decrease, with 12th graders having the lowest rates. Minnesota has the lowest amount of funding dedicated to non-classroom support in the U.S. This can add barriers for schools and teachers attempting to help students who are having difficulty with attendance.³

RISK FACTORS

The educational attainment of the parent or guardian of a child is very influential on their views toward school. If a parent finds school a waste of time, the student is going to attend less often and spend less energy on their academic performance. The Minnesota Department of Education identified a link between maternal education and student attendance in the early years. The lower the mother's education at the time of the child's birth, the more likely the child was to accrue numerous absences.⁴

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

The Youth Engagement Program (YEP) works with teens age 12-18 who are identified as truants from public schools. YEP staff address issues causing truancy and provide resources to youth and their families. Child Protection staff work in a similar manner with children under 12. Child Protection staff work with school districts to provide educational stability for children placed in foster care. This may include transportation to ensure children are able to attend their original school.

Information to note

- Between 2008 – 2016, Ramsey County public school students had an average attendance rate of 94.4%.
- The lower the mother's education at the time of a child's birth, the more likely the child will accrue numerous absences.

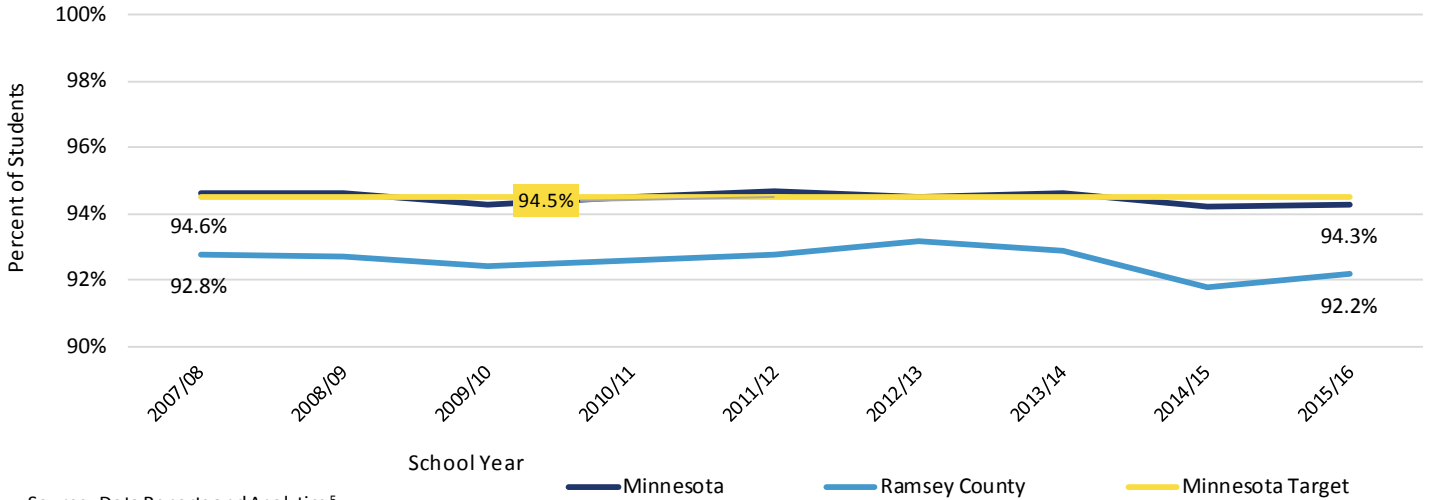
¹ Chang HN, Romero M. Present, engaged, and accounted for. The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades. National center for Children in Poverty. 2008. http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_837.html. Published September 2008. Accessed July 12, 2017.

² Data & Analytics. Minnesota Department of Education. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>. Accessed July 12, 2017.

³ Public Education Finances: 2014. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/econ/g14-aspef.pdf>. Updated June 9, 2016. Accessed July 12, 2017.

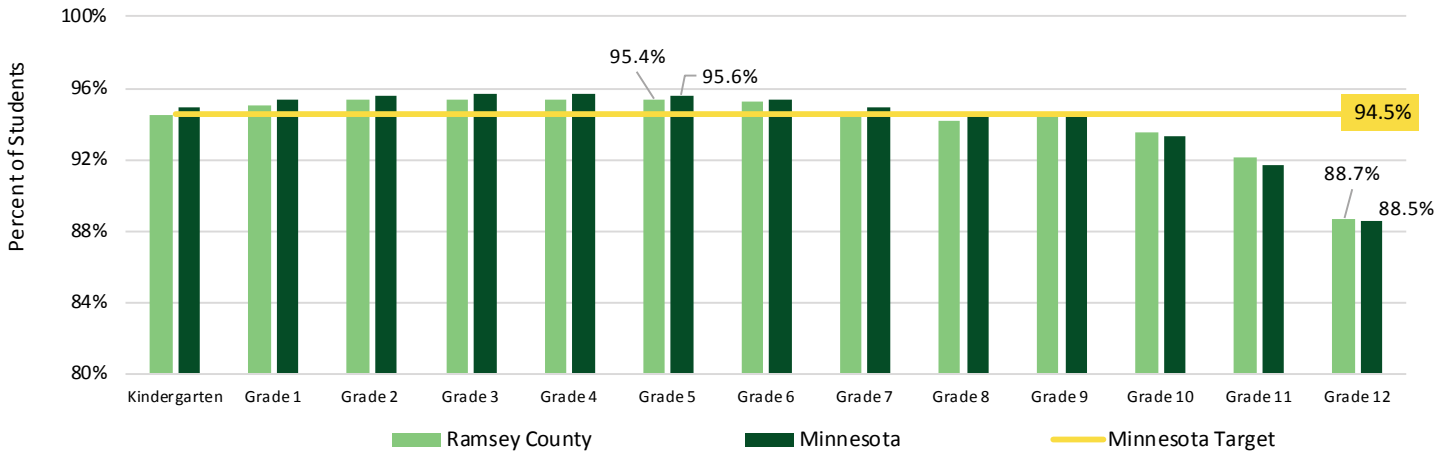
⁴ Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System. Minnesota Department of Education. <http://ecls.mn.gov/>. Accessed July 12, 2017.

K-12 Public School Attendance Rates



Source: Data Reports and Analytics.⁵

K-12 Public School Attendance by Grade, 2015-16



Source: Data Reports and Analytics.⁵

⁵ Data Reports and Analytics. Minnesota Department of Education Web site. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>. Accessed July 19, 2017.