



Chronic Teacher Absences

School Data, Research, and Reporting
State Board of Education
December, 2018

Teacher Leave Policies



Teacher Absence Policies

- There are three types of regular leave for full- and part-time classroom teachers:
 - Annual Leave
 - Personal Leave
 - Sick Leave
- Leave policies for educators are dictated by G.S. § 115C. Otherwise, educators follow leave policy as established by the State Office of Human Resources (G.S. § 126).

Annual Leave

- Full- and part-time employees earn annual leave according to their length of service.
- Full-time employees with fewer than 5 years of service earn 1.17 days of annual leave per month. Employees with 20 or more years of service earn 2.17 days of annual leave per month.
- LEAs have the authority to set the length of an educator's workday. Annual leave earning must be scaled to account for the length of the employee's workday.

Annual Leave

- Teachers have 10 days of annual leave scheduled in the school calendar. These leave days must be taken.
- Certified instructional staff who require a substitute may not take annual leave at any time that students are scheduled to be in attendance*.
- Certified instructional staff who are restricted in their use of annual leave accrue personal leave at the same rate as classroom teachers.

Personal Leave

- Personal leave is accrued at a rate of 0.2 days per month by all certified staff who require a substitute when absent.
- Personal leave must be approved by supervisor, but cannot be denied when requested at least 5 days in advance.
- Personal leave may be carried over from one year to the next, but a teacher may carry a maximum of 5 days of personal leave into a new fiscal year. Excess personal leave is converted to sick leave.

Sick Leave

- Sick leave is accumulated at a rate of one day per month. Sick leave may be accumulated indefinitely.
- Superintendent reserves the right to require documentation for an employee's use of sick leave.
- Sick leave may not be paid out upon separation of employment except in the case of long-term disability.

Sick Leave

- Approved uses of sick leave:
 - Personal illness or injury
 - Care for newborn, or adopted child
 - Medical appointments
 - Illness of immediate family member
 - Death in immediate family
 - Elective medical procedures (30 days' notice)
 - Care for injured military family member

Chronic Teacher Absenteeism



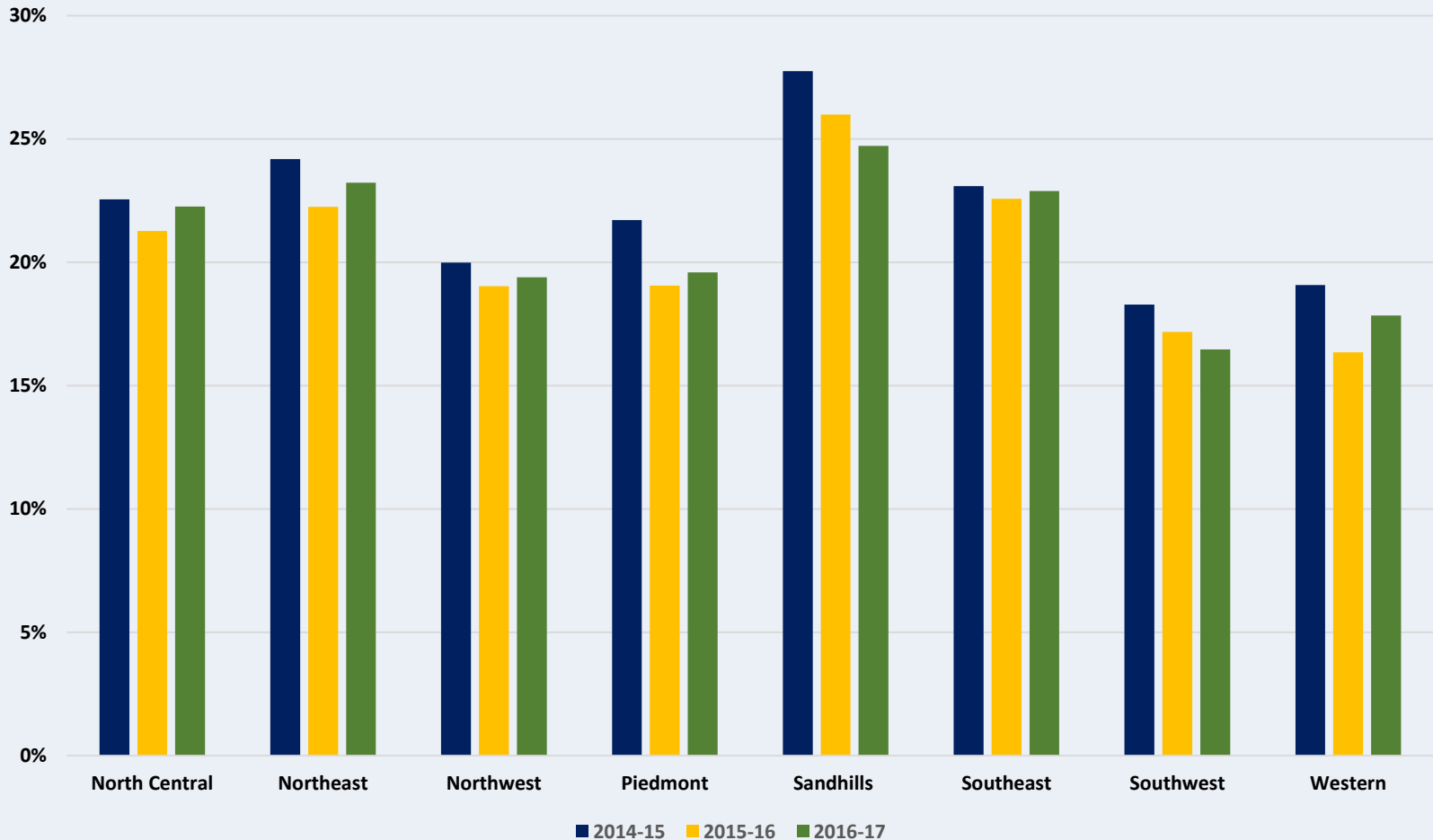
Context and Definition

- Given that teachers cannot use annual leave on instructional days and personal leave is limited to two days per year, teachers might use sick leave as a way to manage an unexpected need to be away from work when students are in session.
- For the purposes of this presentation, we defined teachers in North Carolina who used 10 or more non-consecutive sick days in an academic year as “chronically absent”.
- We examine chronic teacher absenteeism by a variety of demographic variables for the 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 school years.

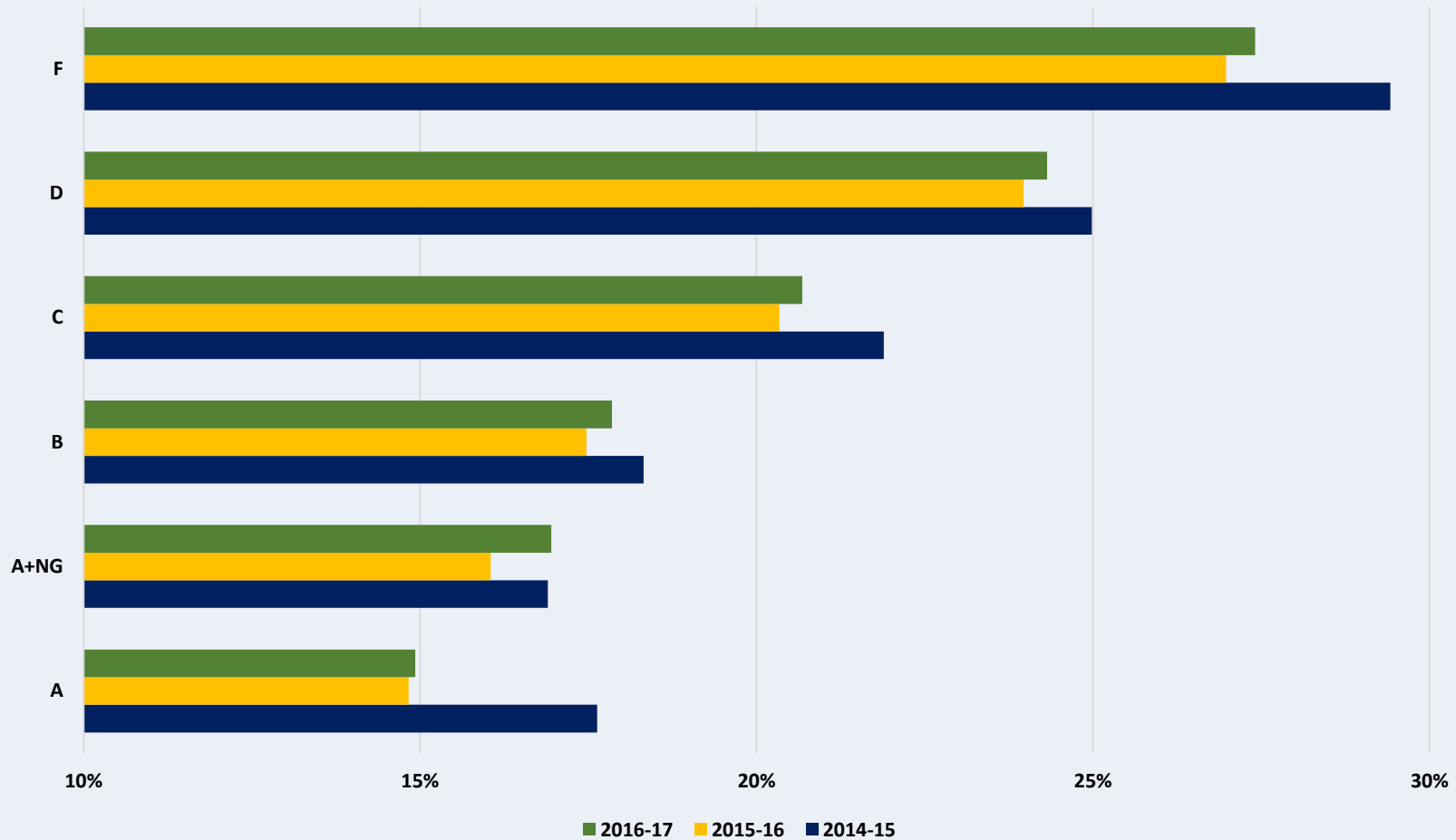
State-wide Descriptive Statistics

School Year	Total Number of Educators	Total Number of Chronically Absent	Percentage of Chronically Absent
2014-15	98,159	21,390	21.8%
2015-16	97,595	21,993	22.5%
2016-17	97,839	22,121	22.6%

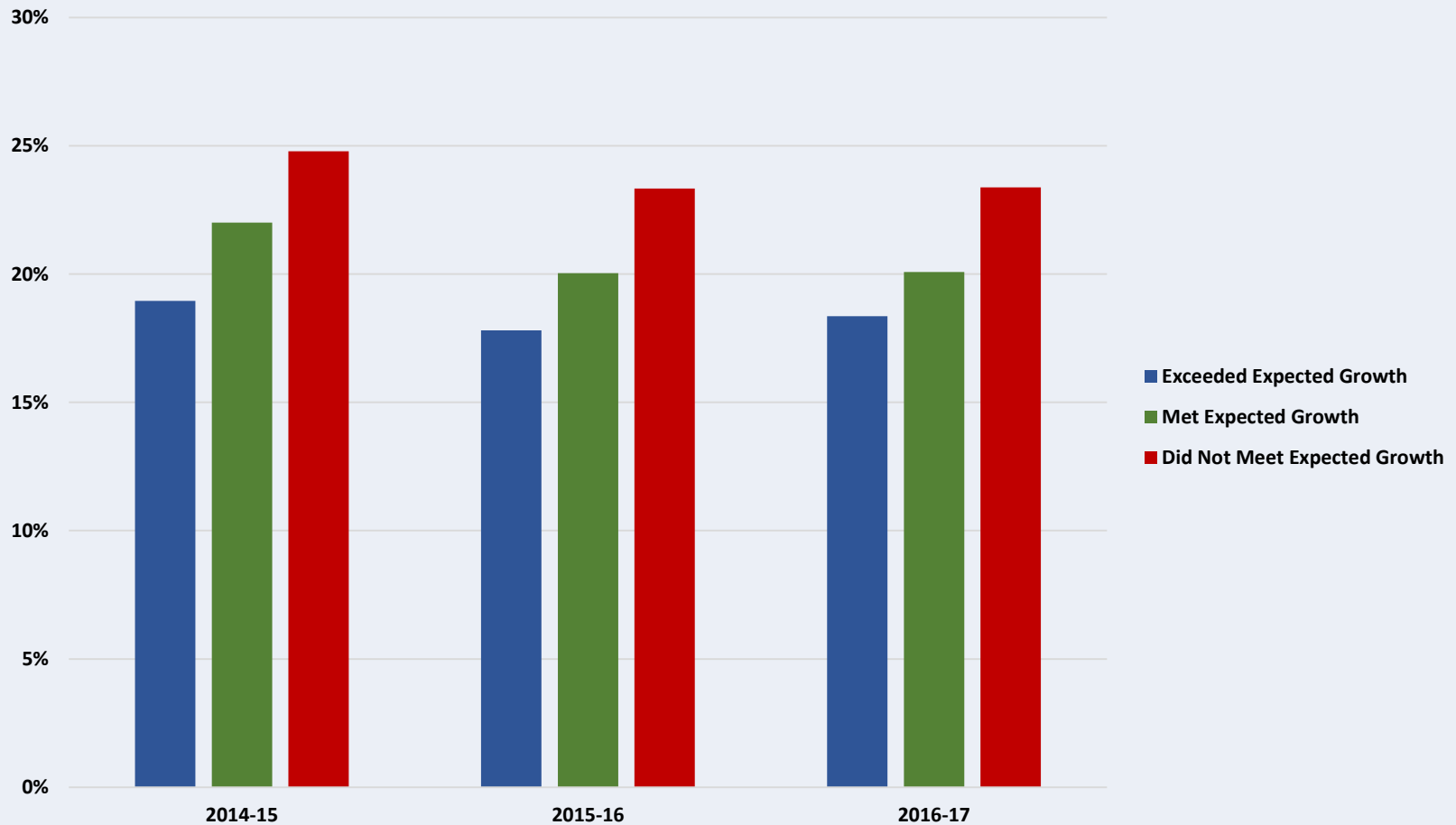
Chronic Absenteeism by SBE Region



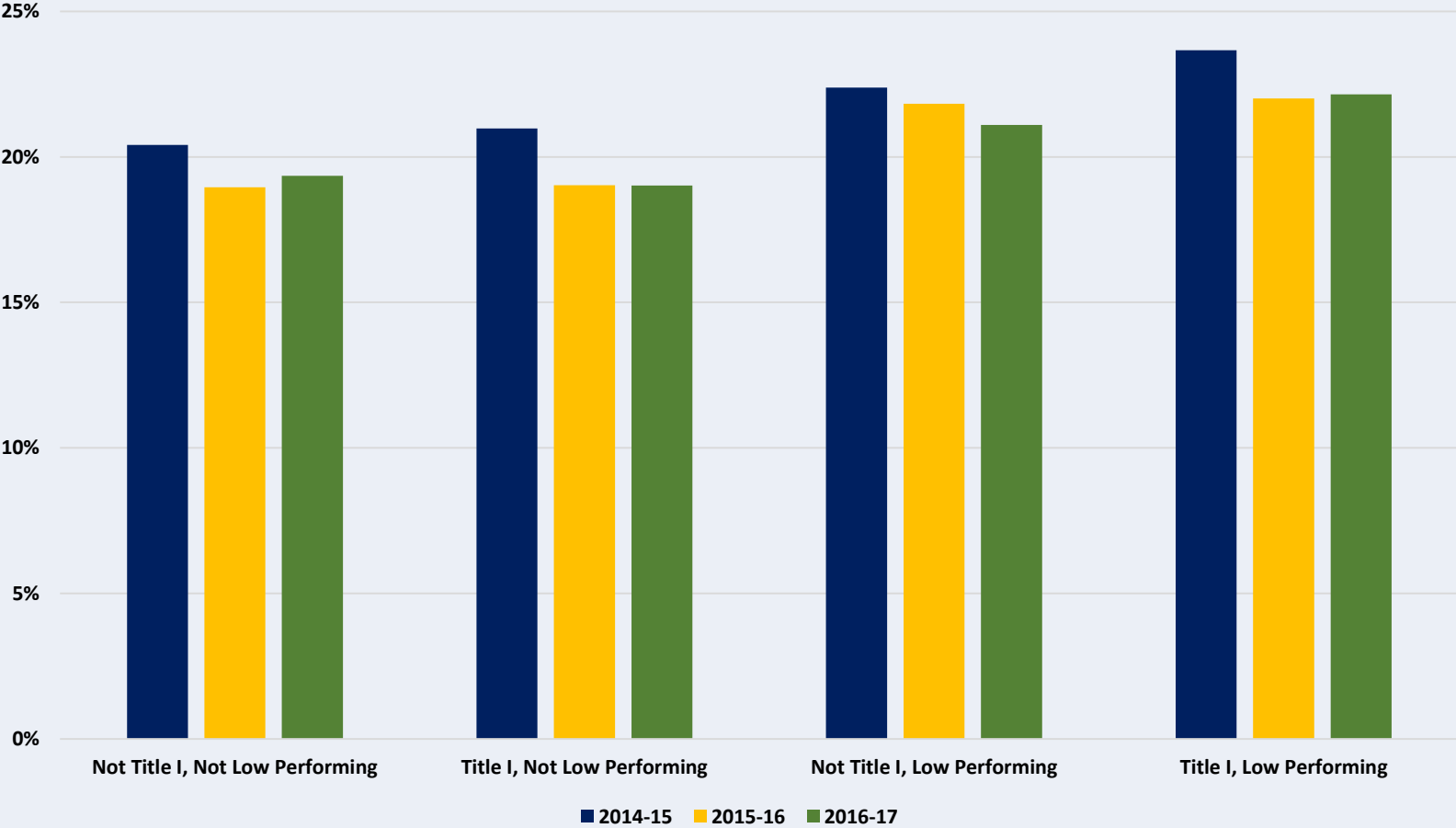
Chronic Absenteeism by School Report Card Grade



Chronic Absenteeism by School EVAAS Growth

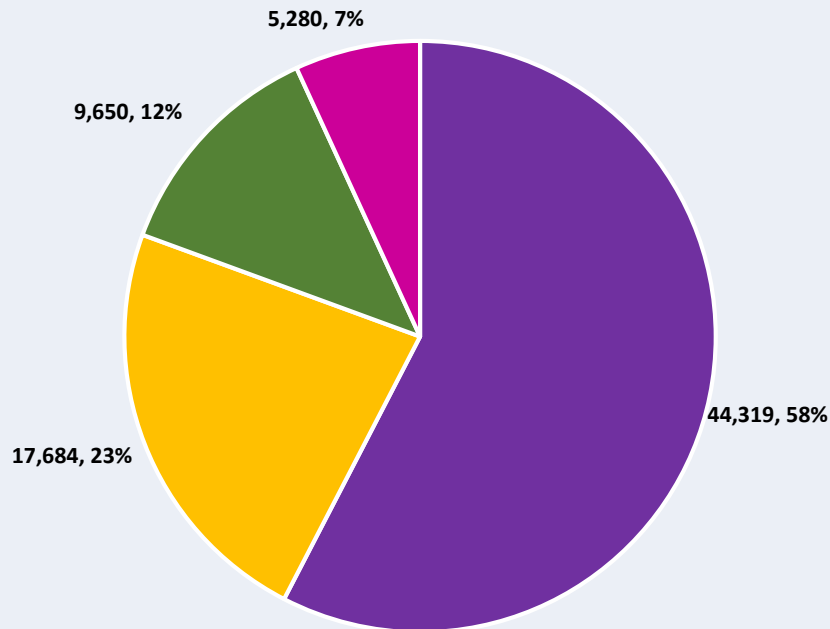


Chronic Absenteeism by School Type (Title I and Low Performing)

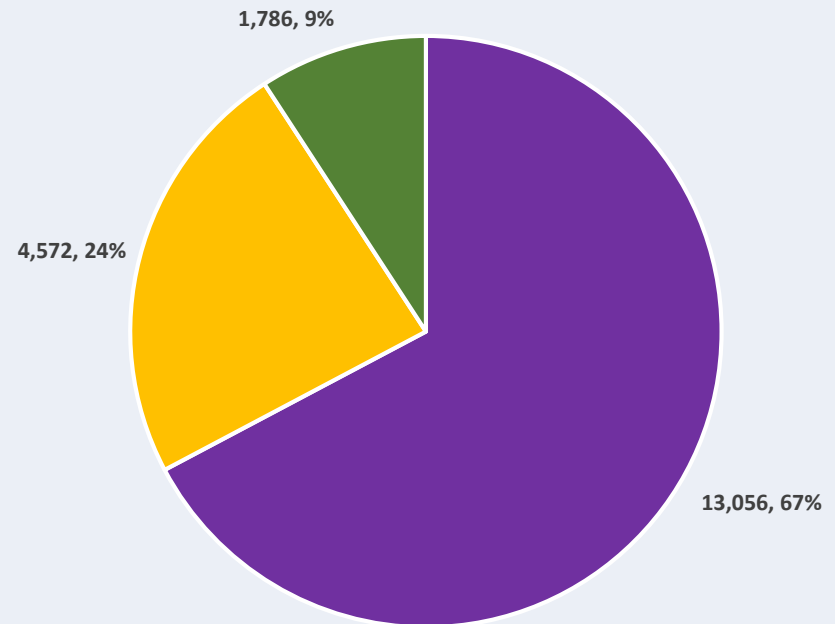


Repeated Chronic Absenteeism

Teachers in All Three Years by Number of Years of Chronic Absenteeism, (n=76,933)



Teachers with Two Years in NC Schools by Years of Chronic Absenteeism (n=19,414)



■ No Chronic Absenteeism ■ One Year Chronic Absenteeism
■ Two Years Chronic Absenteeism ■ Three Years Chronic Absenteeism

■ No Chronic Absenteeism ■ One Year Chronic Absenteeism
■ Two Years Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism and Growth



Impact of Chronic Absenteeism on EVAAS

- NCDPI examined the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student growth from four perspectives:
 - Within School Differences
 - Within Teacher Differences
 - Across School Differences
 - Across School Differences controlling for differences in NC Teaching Working Conditions



Within School

- Do teachers who are designated as chronically absent perform different than teachers within their schools who are not designated as chronically absent?
- On average, teachers who are designated as chronically absent score 0.30 index points lower than their same-school peers who are not chronically absent.
- This difference is statistically, but not practically, significant.

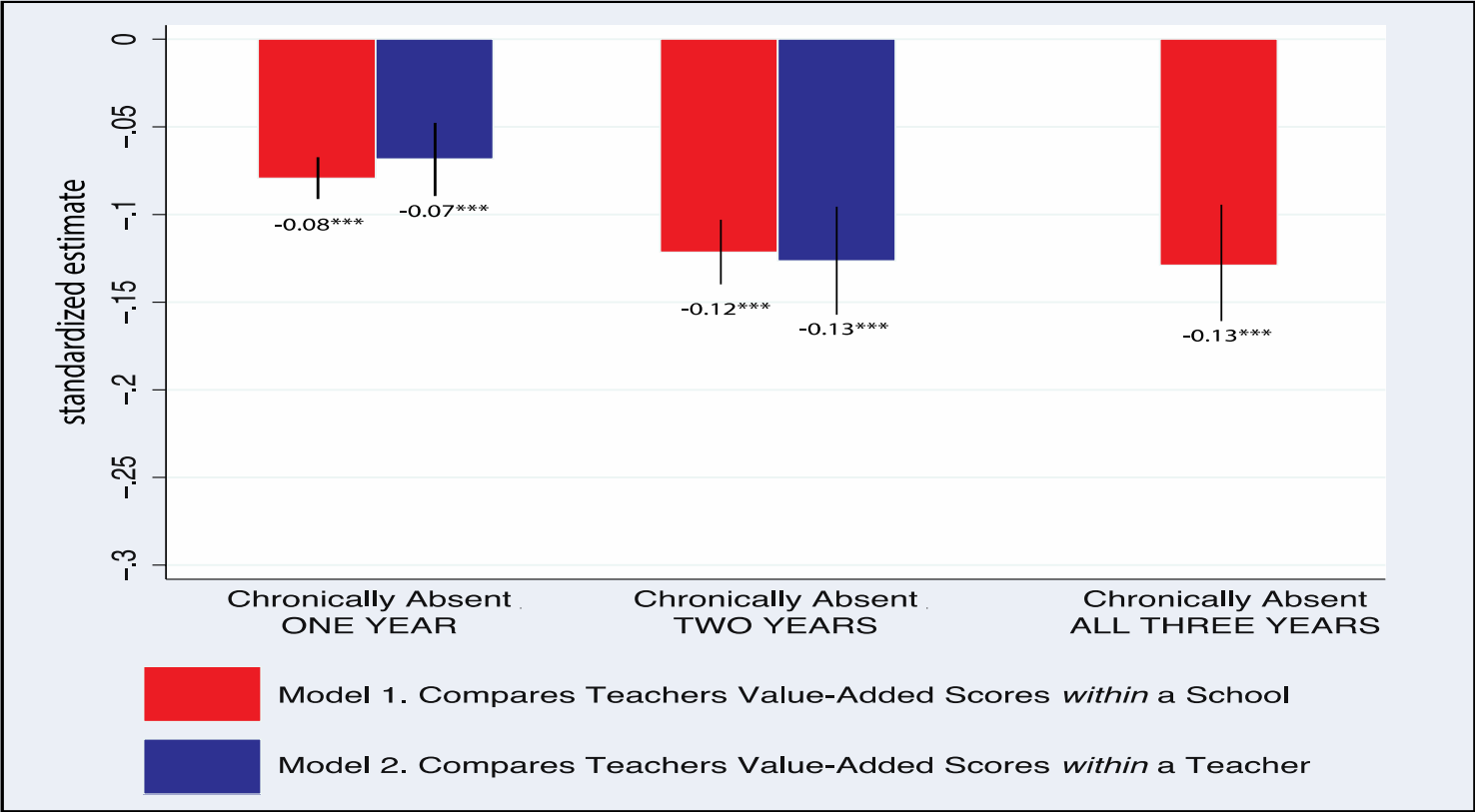


Within Teacher

- What is the average impact of chronic teacher absenteeism on an individual teacher's growth?
- On average, a teacher experiences a -0.10 index point difference in growth when chronically absent than when he/she is not chronically absent.
- This effect is statistically, but not practically, significant.



Charts for Within School and Within Teacher Effects



Notes. Estimates based on 147,650 (model 1) and 125,049 (model 2) teachers with value-added information in 2015-2017. Both models account for differences between years. *** p < 0.001

Across Schools

- Compares the effect of chronic absenteeism on teachers across the state while controlling for the differences among NC schools.
- On average, chronically absent teachers show a -0.10 index point difference in growth than non-chronically absent teachers.
- Statistically, but not practically, significant



Teacher Working Conditions and Chronic Teacher Absenteeism

- Examined the effect of chronic absenteeism on schools, controlling for differences in Teacher Working Conditions
- No statistically significant findings, but data suggests that chronically absent teachers in schools with more positive working conditions experience more negative effects on growth
- More research (multi-year) needed to understand relationship



Financial Impact



Financial Impact

Sick Leave and Absence Without Pay

School Year	Chronic	Number of Teachers	Mean Days Missed	Diff	Additional Cost of One CAT @ \$91.5/day*	Total Annual Cost to State
2015	Yes	23,105	13.01	7.62	\$697.23	\$16,109,499.20
	No	89,799	5.39			
2016	Yes	23,621	13.06	7.92	\$724.68	\$17,117,666.30
	No	69,666	5.14			
2017	Yes	23,771	13.08	7.85	\$718.28	\$17,074,115.00
	No	68,713	5.23			

*Daily rate is the average of the Licensed Substitute rate of \$103 and the Unlicensed Rate of \$80



Financial Impact

Sick Leave, Extended Sick Leave and Absence Without Pay

School Year	Chronic	Number of Teachers	Mean Days Missed	Diff	Additional Cost of One CAT @ \$91.5/day*	Total Annual Cost to State
2015	Yes	23,105	13.86	8.32	\$761.28	\$17,589,374.40
	No	89,799	5.54			
2016	Yes	23,621	13.94	7.92	\$785.96	\$18,159,605.80
	No	69,666	5.35			
2017	Yes	23,771	13.95	7.85	\$777.75	\$17,969,913.80
	No	68,713	5.45			

*Daily rate is the average of the Licensed Substitute rate of \$103 and the Unlicensed Rate of \$80



Policy Considerations



Extended Sick Leave

- 4.2.1 Eligibility and Rate of Earning
- Extended sick leave is available to classroom teachers and media coordinators who require substitutes if they are absent due to their own personal illness or injury and have exhausted all **available** accumulated paid leave (sick leave, annual vacation leave, and bonus leave). In order to be eligible, the employee must be in a permanent full- or part- time position. Those qualifying are allowed extended sick leave of up to 20 workdays throughout the regular (annual) term of employment.



Annual Leave for Catastrophic Illness

- 3.2.1 Benefit
- Instructional personnel who require substitutes and may take annual vacation leave at a time when students are scheduled to be in attendance if the leave is due to a catastrophic illness of the employee and if the entire employee's available sick leave has been exhausted.
- This leave is available only for the employee's personal illness.

- 3.2.2 Determining Eligibility
- The local superintendent or a committee designated by the superintendent shall determine whether an illness is catastrophic by considering such factors as:
- (a) The debilitating nature of the condition, (b) The life-threatening potential of the condition, (c) The duration of the condition, (d) The monetary hardship incurred because of the condition, (e) The expected length of the leave, and (f) Other options available to the employee, such as state disability.



Policy Clarification

- Some LEAs interpret the term *available* in Section 4.2.1 as leave that may be accessed on an instructional day.
- Other LEAs interpret the policy to mean all leave accumulated by the employee.
- The first interpretation has the effect of granting all teachers an additional 20 sick leave days beyond the accrued 10 sick days.



Acknowledgements

- Dr. Timothy Drake, *NCSU*
- Dr. Andrew Baxter, *Public Impact*



Questions and Comments

