



Colleges and Universities • Postsecondary

The Number We're Not Counting

Why should colleges measure an absenteeism-adjusted participation rate?

10 slides • 2 handouts • evidence from Schools Spared, Children Punished and the Attendance Science™ research base



95% and 60% look identical

“

A student attending 95% of sessions and a student attending 60% both appear identically in an enrollment count. They do not appear identically in an outcome. By the time the dashboard lights up red, the student has often already decided, quietly, that they do not belong.

Source: Gentle-Genitty, *The Number We're Not Counting*, Inside Higher Ed, Beyond Transfer (Sept 3, 2026)



Every story in this series is a composite or a published case. Names are invented.



What colleges are asking

Why should colleges measure an absenteeism-adjusted participation rate?

1

Early-alert systems wait for midterm grades.

2

Enrollment is binary; engagement is not.

3

Students signal trouble one missed class at a time.



Shared words before shared work



Absenteeism-adjusted participation

The headline enrollment number, discounted by the share of students past a chronic absence threshold.



Chronic threshold

The K-12 10% standard, adapted for a postsecondary calendar.



Low latency

Attendance data arrives daily, long before grades.



The numbers behind the moment

10%

chronic threshold borrowed from K-12, adapted to the college calendar

Gentle-Genitty, The Number We're Not Counting, Inside Higher Ed, Beyond Transfer (Sept 3, 2026)

Week 3

outreach replaces a withdrawal form in week 12

Gentle-Genitty, The Number We're Not Counting, Inside Higher Ed, Beyond Transfer (Sept 3, 2026)

30 yrs

Dartmouth's Class of 1926 followed: participation, not grades, predicted later success

Collins, The Credential Society, via Gentle-Genitty, The Number We're Not Counting, Inside Higher Ed, Beyond Transfer (Sept 3, 2026)



Match the response to the reason

Caregiving

A structural signal, not a character flaw.

Transportation

Route support before withdrawal.

Work schedule

Offer schedule and stop-out options.

Mental health

Connect to counseling early.



Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: \$0

Build the dashboard

Use LMS and class attendance you already collect.

02

Cost: \$0

Validate it

Test whether it predicts stop-out earlier than current triggers.

03

Partner

Staff where it matters

Put advisors where the flags concentrate.



A PRESENCE™ prompt for your building



Problem definition



Research evidence



Environmental context



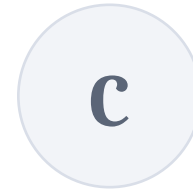
Statistical analysis



Equity assessment



Network and partnership



Compliance and legal



Evidence-based recommendations

YOUR PROMPT

Pull last year's stop-outs. Look back at their attendance in weeks 1 to 4. How many crossed 10% before any grade signal?



Common missteps, and how you will know it works



Using attendance to police or push students out



Waiting for midterm grades



Reporting the adjusted rate without a support plan

LEADING INDICATOR • Moves first

**Students flagged and contacted
by week 3**

LAGGING INDICATOR • Confirms it worked

Term-to-term persistence



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HANDOUTS Seat Card (A) and Find Your Data worksheet (B)

KEEP GOING IN THIS SERIES

Seat 50: Calculating the Adjusted Rate

Seat 51: Week Three, Not Week Twelve

Seat 52: Four Headwinds and the Proof We Need



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showing up possible.*

