



**Destination 2025 Monthly: June 2017**  
**Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management\***

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**Key Findings**

- On average, employees were present 95% of contracted days, missing an average of 10 days each year.
- In 2016 and 2017, long-term substitute teachers taught 3.6% of SCS students for an average of 67 days each.
- In 2017, 1% of students were assigned to teachers who taught outside their areas of certification.

**Employee Absences**

Data provided by the Department of Human Resources for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017 were analyzed to determine the degree of absenteeism among those Shelby County Schools employees who had the most direct impact on student achievement. Teachers, school administrators, and central office administrators, classified by Human Resources as salaried administrative and instructional employees comprised the employee sample population. Non-certificated support personnel classified by Human Resources as Clerical, Classroom Instructional Support, Food Service, Plant Maintenance, and Transportation were not included in this analysis. Attendance rates and reasons for absence were examined. Data were grouped according to both school based and non-school based administrative and instructional employees.

The overall three-year attendance rate for school-based employee groups was 95%, and this percentage remained constant for both school-based administrative and school-based instructional employees. The overall average attendance rate was 93% for non-school-based employees. This attendance rate was the same for non-school-based administrative employees; however, the attendance rate for non-school-based instructional employees was 96%. Three-year averages and data by fiscal year are presented below.

Three-year average attendance rates for FY 2015, 2016, and 2017

| Employee Type                   | Work Base        | Avg. # Employees | Avg. Contract Days | Avg. Days Absent | Avg. Attendance Rate |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| All Groups                      | School Based     | 7,000            | 196                | 10               | 95%                  |
|                                 | Non-School Based | 1,044            | 235                | 16               | 93%                  |
| Administrative Certified        | School Based     | 444              | 230                | 11               | 95%                  |
|                                 | Non-School Based | 128              | 217                | 15               | 93%                  |
| Administrative Non-Certificated | School Based     | 46               | 212                | 10               | 95%                  |
|                                 | Non-School Based | 573              | 243                | 17               | 93%                  |
| Instruction                     | School Based     | 5,982            | 193                | 10               | 95%                  |
|                                 | Non-School Based | 117              | 203                | 8                | 96%                  |

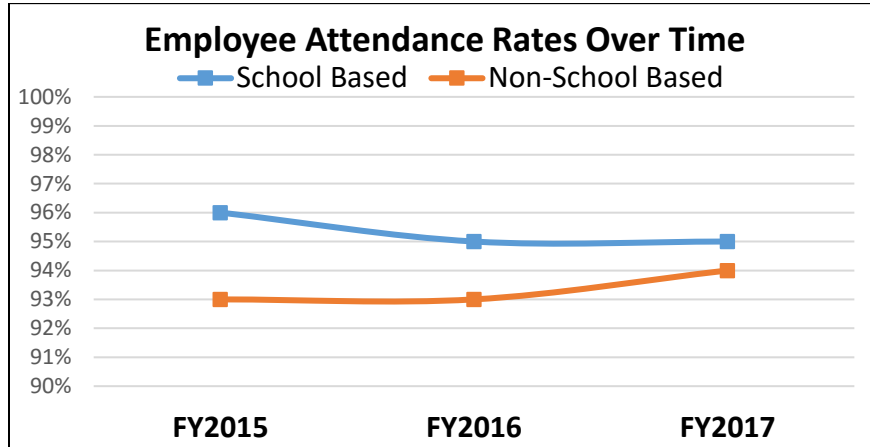
\*This brief contains teacher attendance/certification data provided by the Department of Human Resources..



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When examining attendance rates over time for both school-based and non-school-based employees, attendance has remained relatively flat since FY15 and has ranged from 93% to 96%. However, the rate for the current fiscal year only reflects attendance through the first part of May in 2017. Attendance may decline slightly if some employee groups begin to take more vacation days in June.



The most frequent reasons for absence for all groups were illness (61%), vacation (13%), and Board-approved absences (11%). The graph below shows the comparison of school-based to non-school-based employees. Sick days were the most frequent reason for absence among school-based employees (67%), and vacation days were the most frequent reason for absence among non-school based employees (50%). This is an expected trend given that most school-based staff including teachers do not have vacation days while year-round full-time employees do earn vacation time. Note that medical leave of absence was not presented as a separate reason for absence in Human Resources data. Sick days may reflect some employees on medical leave.

### Distribution of Employee Absences by Reason

| Employee Group   | Absence Reason    | Percentage |
|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| School Based     | Sick              | 67.44%     |
|                  | Vacation          | 3.09%      |
|                  | Board Approved    | 11.47%     |
|                  | Personal          | 7.73%      |
|                  | Professional Day  | 6.22%      |
|                  | Unpaid Absence    | 2.50%      |
|                  | Jury Duty         | 0.73%      |
|                  | On-Job Injury     | 0.59%      |
|                  | Military          | 0.19%      |
|                  | Religious Holiday | 0.04%      |
|                  | Legislative Leave | 0.00%      |
| Non-School Based | Sick              | 37.58%     |
|                  | Vacation          | 50.45%     |
|                  | Board Approved    | 7.24%      |
|                  | Personal          | 1.56%      |
|                  | Professional Day  | 1.40%      |
|                  | Unpaid Absence    | 1.10%      |
|                  | Jury Duty         | 0.38%      |
|                  | On-Job Injury     | 0.19%      |
|                  | Military          | 0.09%      |
|                  | Religious Holiday | 0.01%      |
|                  | Legislative Leave | 0.00%      |

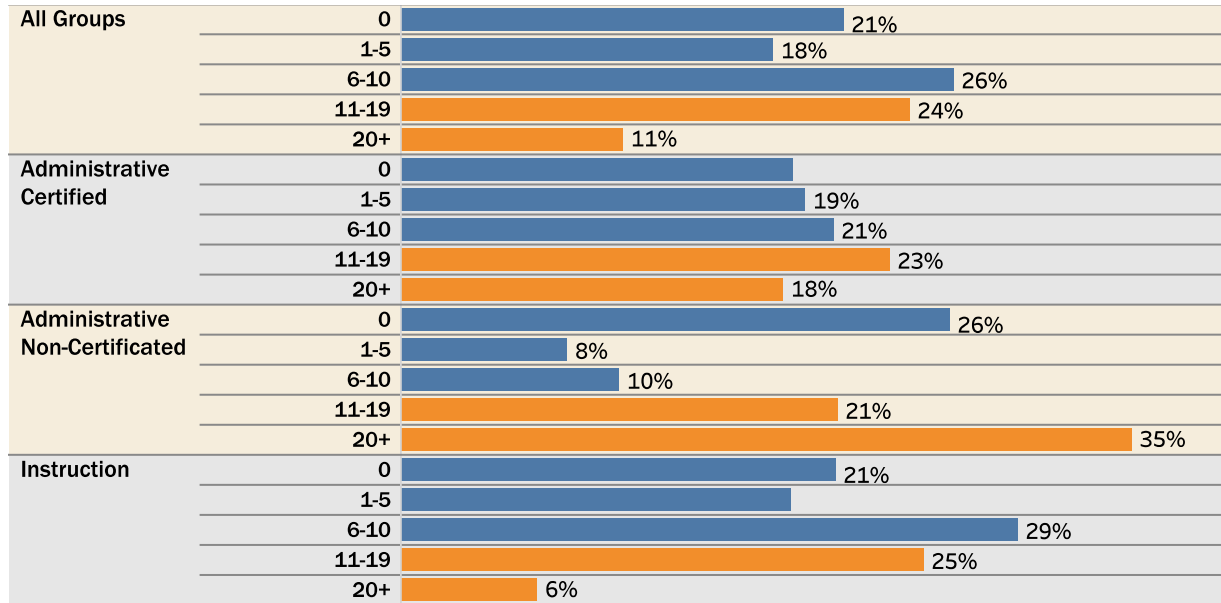


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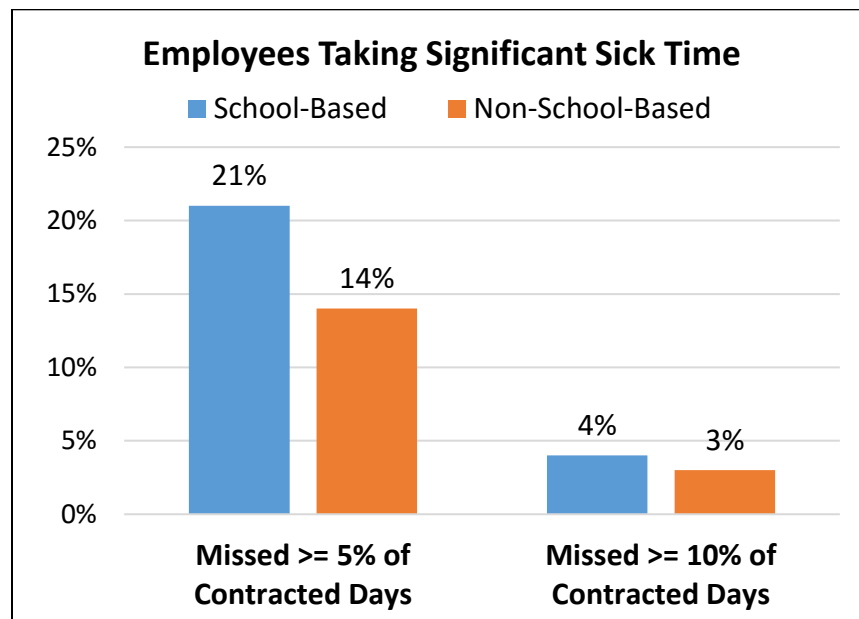
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Thirty-five percent of all employees missed an average of more than 10 days, which accounted for 74% of the total contracted days missed. Comparison by employee type revealed that 46% percent of Administrative Non-Certificated employees, 41% of Administrative Certified employees, and 31% of Instructional employees were absent more than 10 days.

### Distribution of Employees by Number of Absences This Fiscal Year



Given the varying number of contracted days and approved absence types for different employee groups, the chart below shows how many employees may be at risk for absenteeism based on the percentage of sick days taken during the year. However, the employees in this group should be considered at risk on an individual, case-by-case basis, as some may be on medical leave or have other extenuating circumstances that have contributed to their absences due to illness.





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### Long-term Substitutes

Long-term substitute positions for regular classroom teachers were included in this analysis. Charter schools were excluded because teacher staffing is not managed centrally for these schools. Specialist positions of counselor, librarian, art, music, and PE were not included since they serve the whole school instead of a subset of classes and students. On average, 3.6% of students each received 67 days of classroom instruction from long-term substitute teachers in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

| Year    | Long-term Substitutes | Avg. Instructional Days | Students Served | Avg. District Enrollment | Avg. % of District Enrollment |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2015-16 | 92                    | 57                      | 3,808           | 98,734                   | 3.9%                          |
| 2016-17 | 91                    | 77                      | 3,069           | 93,004                   | 3.3%                          |

Over the two-year period, the percentage of middle school students (5.5%) effected by long-term subs was greater than that found in both high schools (3.6%) and the elementary schools (2.9%).

| Level      | Year    | Long-term Substitutes | Instructional Days | Students Served | Enrollment | % of Enrollment |
|------------|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Elementary | 2015-16 | 65                    | 3,671              | 1,304           | 52,822     | 2.5%            |
|            | 2016-17 | 72                    | 5,496              | 1,633           | 49,770     | 3.3%            |
| Middle     | 2015-16 | 16                    | 823                | 1,645           | 19,171     | 8.6%            |
|            | 2016-17 | 6                     | 482                | 387             | 17,599     | 2.2%            |
| High       | 2015-16 | 11                    | 711                | 859             | 26,741     | 3.2%            |
|            | 2016-17 | 13                    | 996                | 1,049           | 25,635     | 4.1%            |
|            |         | Long-term Substitutes | Instructional Days | Students Served | Enrollment | % of Enrollment |

### Teachers on Waiver

In 2016-17, one percent of students were assigned to teachers who taught outside their areas of certification, meaning they received waivers. Charter schools were excluded because teacher staffing is not managed centrally for these schools.

| Waivers | Students Served | District Enrollment | % of District Enrollment |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 12      | 1,070           | 93,004              | 1.2%                     |

Instances of teachers who taught outside their areas of certification were more frequent in the middle and high schools. Sixty-seven percent of all teachers on waiver were at the secondary level, and 33% were at the elementary school level. Approximately two percent of middle and high school students received instruction from a teacher on waiver, while less than one-tenth of one percent of elementary students were affected.

| Level      | Waivers | Students Served | Enrollment | % of Enrollment |
|------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Elementary | 4       | 44              | 49,770     | 0.1%            |
| Middle     | 3       | 373             | 17,599     | 2.1%            |
| High       | 5       | 653             | 25,635     | 2.5%            |
|            | Waivers | Students Served | Enrollment | % of Enrollment |



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### Recommendations

In order to promote strong employee attendance and ensure all students receive high-quality instruction from their teachers every day, SCS will:

- Present a new employee attendance policy for the Board's consideration in the coming months.
- Provide employee attendance dashboards, manuals and training to principals to assess absenteeism at schools.
- Determine successes and lessons learned from the 2016-17 school substitute budget pilot that may encourage improved employee attendance.
- Continue to promote employee wellness initiatives that can improve health and attendance.
- Continue to implement early hiring and recruitment practices for teaching positions that limit the need for long-term substitutes and waivers.