Strengthen our Community

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IMPACT ANALYSIS

2024

Applied Analysis

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APPLIED ANALYSIS

February 20, 2025

Mr. Mike Kazmierski
Executive Director
Strengthen Our Community
549 Court Street
Reno, Nevada 89501

RE: Impact Analysis of Absenteeism in Clark County

Dear Mr. Kazmierski:

In response to your request, Applied Analysis ("AA") is pleased to present the enclosed report, *Chronic Absenteeism Impact Analysis*. This report examines the scope and implications of chronic absenteeism among K-12 students in Southern Nevada, focusing on its economic, fiscal, and social impacts. The quantified impacts are expressed as lifetime costs associated with the graduation year of the student group studied, reflecting variations in when those impacts may materialize.

This report was developed specifically at your request. While we are confident in the methodologies employed, we do not represent their applicability beyond this analysis. Our conclusions and estimates are derived from the most recent data available at the time of publication and are based on a comprehensive review of the relevant information. As such, AA does not assume responsibility for any subsequent changes in data, market conditions, regulations or other factors that could affect the findings after the report's issuance. Although the data is believed to be accurate, it has not been audited or independently verified by AA, and we therefore do not make assurances regarding its completeness.

The report provides an overview of the analysis and a summary of key findings. Any reproduction of this report must include the document in its entirety. AA has retained all additional working papers associated with the analysis and would be pleased to discuss the report with you at your convenience. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Gordon or Jeremy Aguero at (702) 967-3333.

Sincerely,

Applied Analysis

Applied Analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Overview of the Analysis and Key Conclusions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If the chronic absenteeism rate seen in 2024 persists, Southern Nevada is expected to face a lifetime cost of $610.0 million attributed to the Class of 2025. If this pattern continues the cumulative lifetime costs of chronic absenteeism for the next 20 graduating classes in the Clark County School District ("CCSD") are estimated to reach $14.4 billion by 2044. Targeted and intentional intervention to reduce the rate of chronic absenteeism to pre-COVID levels by 2027 could reduce this cost by $4.7 billion. This includes tax revenue and program cost savings totaling $179.6 million and an economic benefit of $4.5 billion, in addition to the reduction of many unquantifiable losses, costs, and adverse social impacts discussed herein.

Recent Increase in Rate of Chronic Absenteeism

Although the technical definition varies by school district, the negative impacts of high rates of chronic absenteeism—commonly defined as missing a significant portion of instructional days within a school year—are well-documented, particularly with respect to behavioral and lifelong challenges for affected students. In Nevada, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of the instructional days in an academic year. For secondary students, this includes days where a student is marked absent from all classes, rather than individual periods cumulatively amounting to full days of absence.

Over the past decade, chronic absenteeism rates in Clark County have risen dramatically. After gradually increasing from 18.7 percent in 2014 to 21.9 percent in 2019, the rate surged to 34.3 percent in the first post-COVID instructional year. This upward trend peaked at 40.6 percent in 2022 before beginning to decline slightly, though it remains significantly above pre-COVID levels. The issue is particularly pronounced at higher grade levels, where the disparity is even more striking. At the high school level, chronic absenteeism rates rose from 29.7 percent in 2019 to a staggering 55.0 percent in 2022. While the latest figures indicate a decline to 42.4 percent, this still means that more than four in ten high school students in Clark County face the risks and negative outcomes associated with chronic absenteeism.

Recent Increase in Cost per Absentee

Among the many adult behaviors that contribute to the costs associated with chronic absenteeism, some of the most significant are lower average levels of education, which result in reduced lifetime earnings and tax contributions compared to peers, and higher reliance on social programs, leading to increased average costs for those services. Over the past decade, from 2015 to 2024, the lifetime cost of a chronically absent student has risen by 44.4 percent, increasing from $38,700 to $55,800. While this increase is primarily attributed to rising wages across Southern Nevada, additional growth in the costs of providing social programs would likely amplify this trend.

The Rising Future Cost of Chronic Absenteeism

As both the number of chronic absentees and the cost per absentee rise, the economic losses from reduced productivity, decreased tax revenue, and increased social program costs become more significant. In the five years leading up to the pandemic, the lifetime cost of chronic absenteeism for each graduating class in CCSD rose from $243.2 million to $389.3 million annually. In the four years since, this cost peaked at $774.6 million for the graduating class of 2023 and has since decreased slightly to $631.3 million for the graduating class of 2024. Over the past decade, the lifetime cost associated with chronic absenteeism for CCSD's graduating classes has more than doubled. When these cumulative costs are analyzed, the long-term impact of chronic absenteeism becomes even more pronounced. The total estimated lifetime cost for all graduating classes since 2015 amounts to $4.4 billion. If the current rate of chronic absenteeism persists over the next 20 years, the total accumulated costs through 2044 are projected to reach an additional $14.4 billion. Given the broader post-COVID challenges in educational metrics nationwide and the potential for entrenched behavioral patterns to emerge, chronic absenteeism is driving substantial economic and fiscal losses throughout the Southern Nevada community.

Unaddressed and Unquantifiable Contributions to Future Costs

In addition to the seven factors quantified and directly addressed in this analysis, numerous other factors have been researched and documented as being associated with chronic absenteeism. These factors span economic, fiscal, and social domains. One significant example is the increased likelihood of early motherhood among chronically absent high school girls, often coupled with poverty or reliance on social support systems. The long-term effects of this phenomenon, including the potential for their children to also require social assistance, are not included in this analysis but may represent a substantial impact. Similarly, lost economic productivity resulting from increased rates of incarceration, substance abuse, and other behaviors that hinder stable employment may also contribute significantly to the broader implications of chronic absenteeism. Due to the necessary exclusion of these factors from the scope of this study, the findings presented here likely represent a conservative estimate of the full economic, fiscal, and social impacts of chronic absenteeism.

Source: Nevada Department of Education, The Hamilton Project, Referenced Studies

METHODOLOGY

Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
Research Trends and Climate	**Identify Resulting Factors**	**Assess Potential Impacts**	**Report Salient Findings**
Assess Local Trends and Changes in Key Education Metrics	Assess Strength of Studied Relationships	Calculate Current and Expected Future Impacts of Chronic Absenteeism in Clark County	Synthesize Results of Impact Calculations
Perform Subject Research	Compare Viability of Causal Mechanisms and Applicability to Current-Day Southern Nevada	Consider and Calculate Alternate Trends	Present Range of Possible Near-Future Scenarios
Find Reputable, Significant, and Quantifiable Links Among Subjects of Interest	Integrate Findings Across Varied Geography, Methodology, and Timing	Account for Unquantifiable Impacts on Overall Direction and Magnitude of Results	Summarize Overall Findings
			Address Likely Additional and Related Concerns

METHODS AND STRUCTURE

A Description of the Analytical Approach Taken in Constructing the Model

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POST-COVID TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Enrollment and Engagement

Total enrollment across the Clark County School District ("CCSD") decreased by 4.5 percent immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued to decline, reaching a 6.3 percent reduction in 2024 compared to 2019. This represents a total drop of approximately 20,500 students across all grades and schools. During the same period, the number of school-aged children in Clark County increased by 10,100 (2.5 percent), indicating that a smaller proportion of children in Southern Nevada are now enrolled in CCSD schools post-COVID.

While this decline in enrollment may partly reflect challenges in re-engaging students, it may also suggest that families are increasingly seeking alternative education options, such as private schools, charter schools, homeschooling, or online education. Regardless of the underlying causes, this shift reduces opportunities for the community to support these children through the public school system and to implement measures that ensure proficiency in essential subjects such as math, English, and science.

Four-Year Graduation Rates

At both the state and county levels, high school graduation rates in the CCSD, which reached a hard-won peak of 85.8 percent in the spring of 2019, declined slightly in the first year following the pandemic, falling to 80.9 percent in 2021. Although this percentage has been gradually improving since then, it remained below the pre-pandemic level at 81.5 percent in 2024. Several factors likely contribute to this ongoing challenge, including lower enrollment rates among school-aged children, reduced proficiency in core subjects such as math, English, and science, and increases in concerning metrics such as chronic absenteeism rates and behavioral incidents.

Standardized Test Scores

The percentage of students testing at a proficient level or above on standardized assessments across all grade levels dropped significantly following the return to in-person instruction post-COVID. While proficiency rates at the elementary level have shown gradual improvement in the years since, secondary grade levels in the CCSD have experienced stagnation in English language arts and science. Mathematics proficiency among secondary students, particularly at the 11th-grade level, has continued to decline, dropping from 24.5 percent in 2019 to 21.2 percent in 2021 and further to 19.0 percent in 2024.

Increases in All Types of Absences

In the wake of COVID-19, all types of absenteeism have significantly increased both nationwide and in Southern Nevada. While chronic absenteeism has risen sharply, as explored in this analysis, other forms of absenteeism—such as part-time absences, excused absences, and absences due to behavioral incidents—have also seen notable increases compared to pre-COVID levels. Although excused absences and absences caused by suspensions are typically included in chronic absenteeism counts, part-time absences are often overlooked, both in tracking and analysis.

Notably, these part-time absences, however, have similar impacts on students' educational attainment and behavioral development as the full-day absences reflected in chronic absenteeism rates. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that the true combined effects of part-day and full-day absences are greater than the estimates presented in this analysis.

Source: Nevada Department of Education, US Census Bureau, Attendance Works

POST-COVID TRENDS IN CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

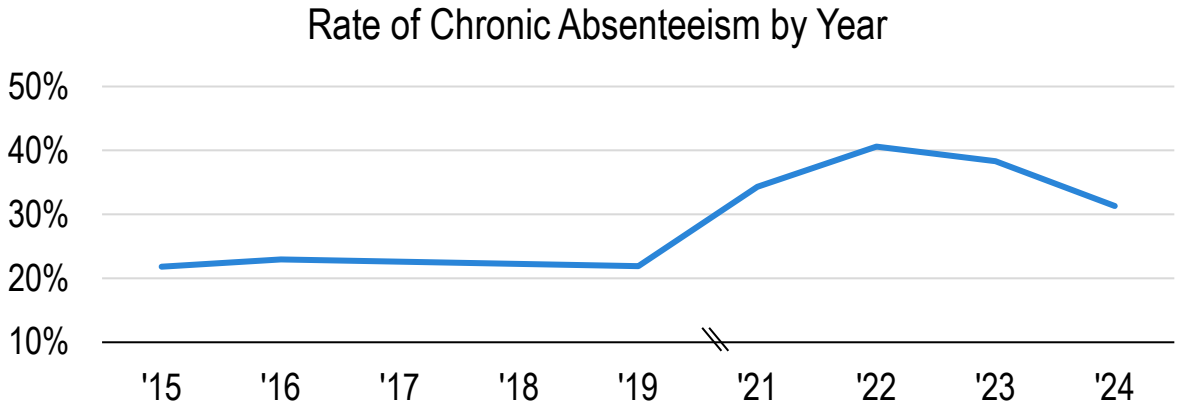
Clark County School District

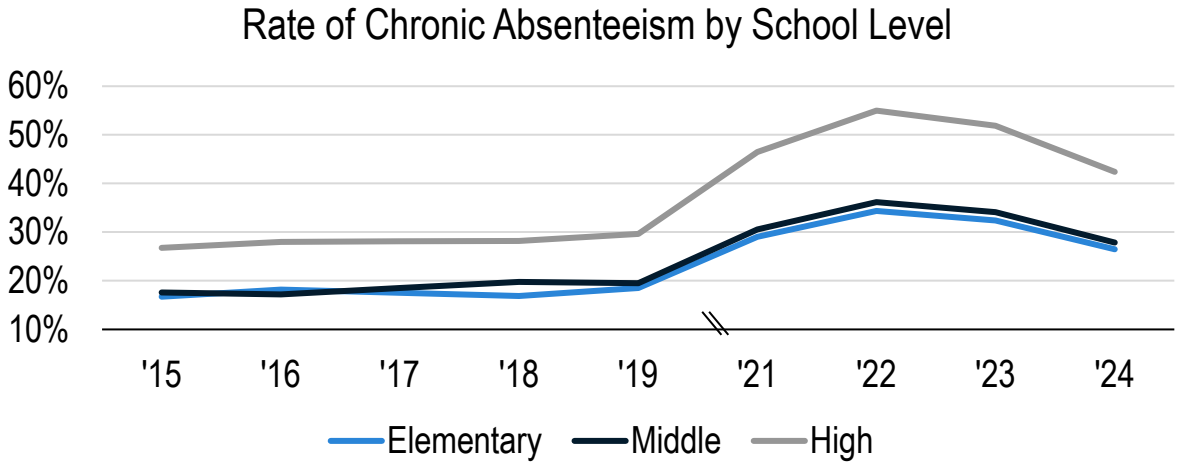
Between 2019 and 2021, the rate of chronic absenteeism in the Clark County School District ("CCSD") increased significantly, rising from 21.9 percent pre-COVID to 34.3 percent post-COVID. This trend worsened during the first full year of in-person instruction, peaking at 40.6 percent in 2022.

In higher grade levels, the problem is even more pronounced. While district-wide chronic absenteeism prior to COVID-19 was 21.9 percent, the high school level consistently showed higher rates, reaching 29.7 percent in 2019. Since then, chronic absenteeism at the high school level has remained approximately 35 percent higher than the district average, peaking at 55.0 percent in 2022. By 2024, this rate had only slightly decreased to 42.4 percent.

The elevated rates of chronic absenteeism in later grades are especially concerning, as these years are critical in shaping students' long-term life outcomes. Research from other large districts, such as Chicago, underscores that behavior and performance during high school are strong predictors of high school completion and college success. Additionally, studies highlight the significant role of school culture and intervention strategies in improving degree attainment at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

For many high school dropouts, chronic absenteeism emerges as a red flag as early as sixth grade, with most dropouts showing signs of disengagement by ninth grade. Chronic absenteeism in lower grades (K-8) often predicts similar patterns in high school. Recognizing the systemic nature of this issue is essential to understanding its far-reaching effects on students' life outcomes and, consequently, their ability to contribute positively to the Southern Nevada community.





Source: Nevada Department of Education

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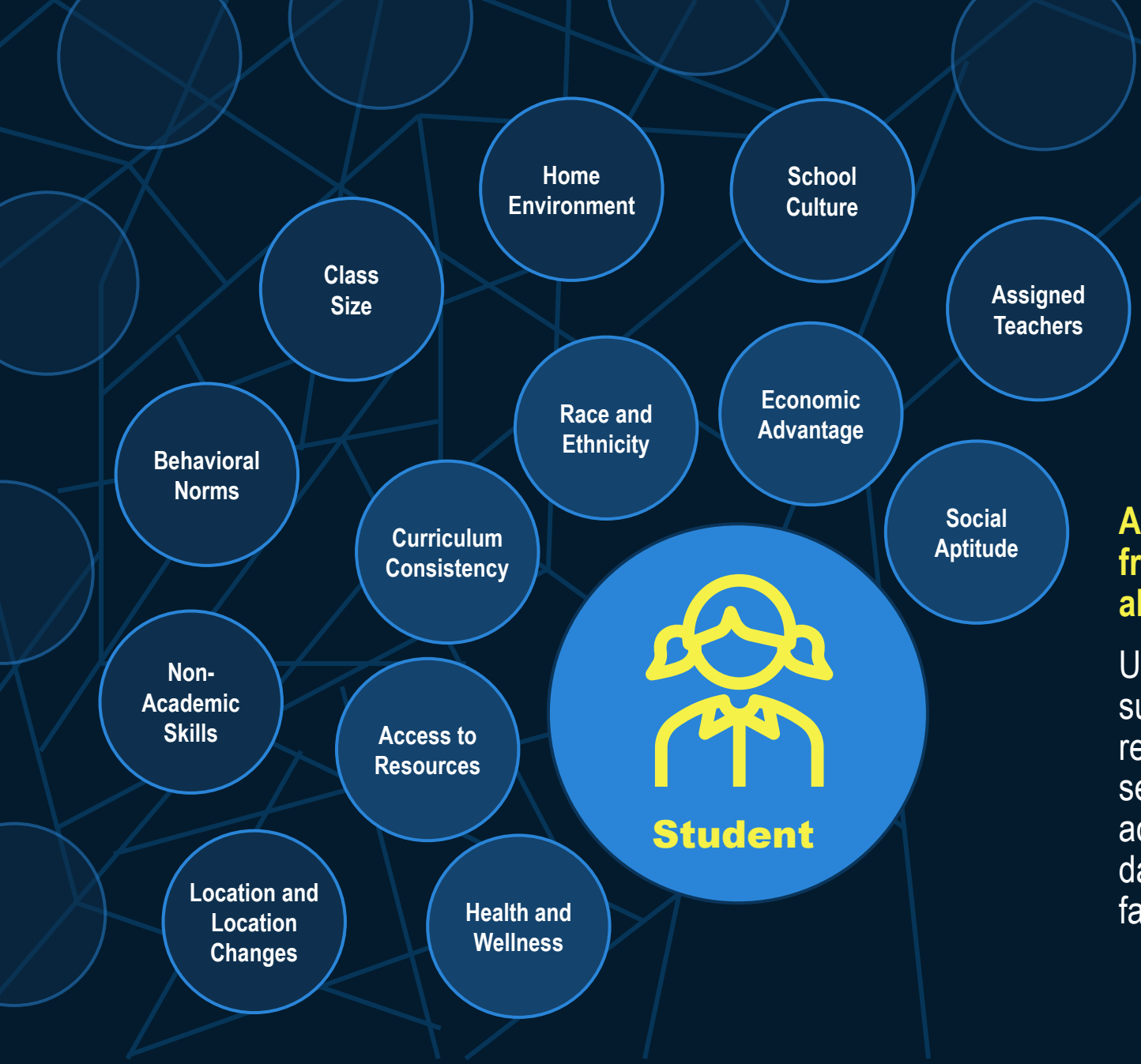


There is a large and complex web of factors influencing the success and behavior of every student.

This includes a wide variety of factors outside of the jurisdiction of the education system, such as home life, cultural norms, and economic security.

As a result, only a limited number of factors resulting from a student's behavioral pattern, such as chronic absenteeism, can be quantified.

Unlike many other behavioral factors influencing student success, chronic absenteeism can be easily and accurately recorded by educational professionals without the use of any secondary data or reliance on assumptions of survey accuracy. A student simply is or is not present on a given day. There are a limited number of reliably quantifiable factors known to result from the behavior.

PRIMARY IMPACT AREAS

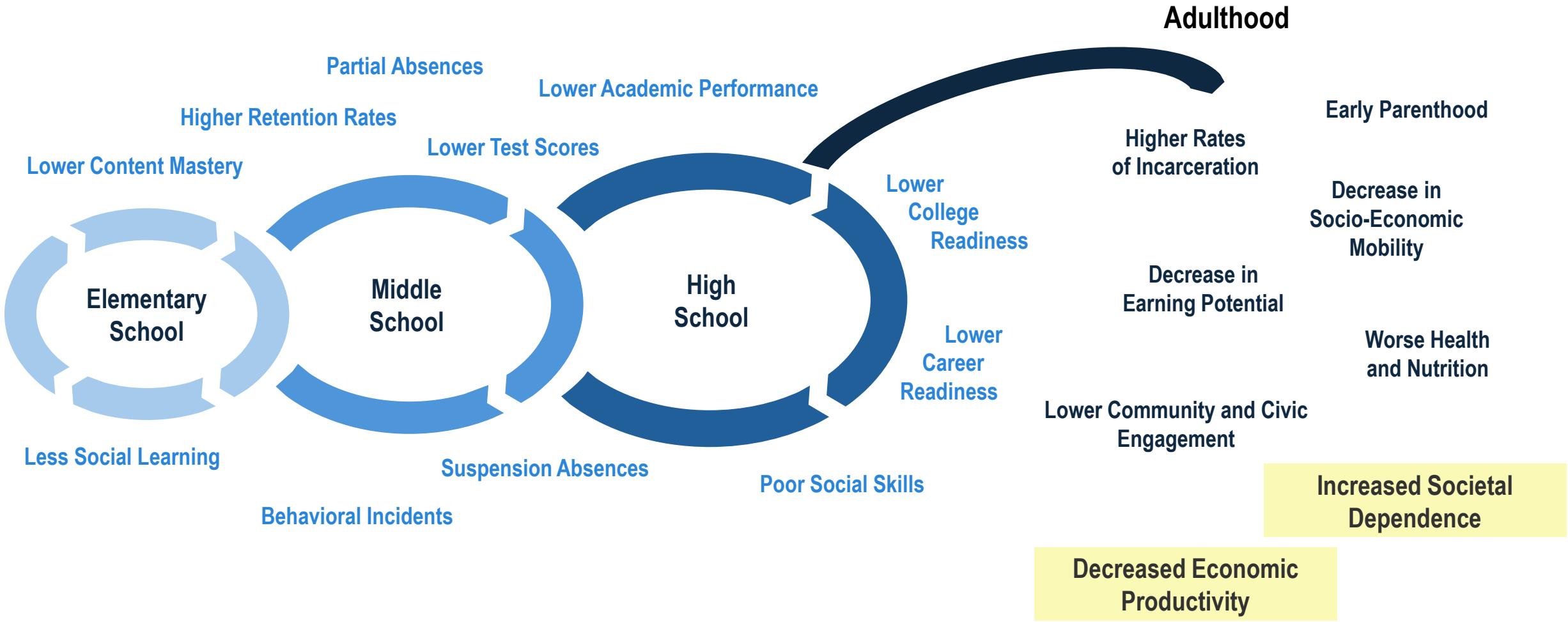
ECONOMIC IMPACT AREAS

- High School-Level Degree and Productivity Differences
- Postsecondary Educational Attainment and Productivity Differences

FISCAL IMPACT AREAS

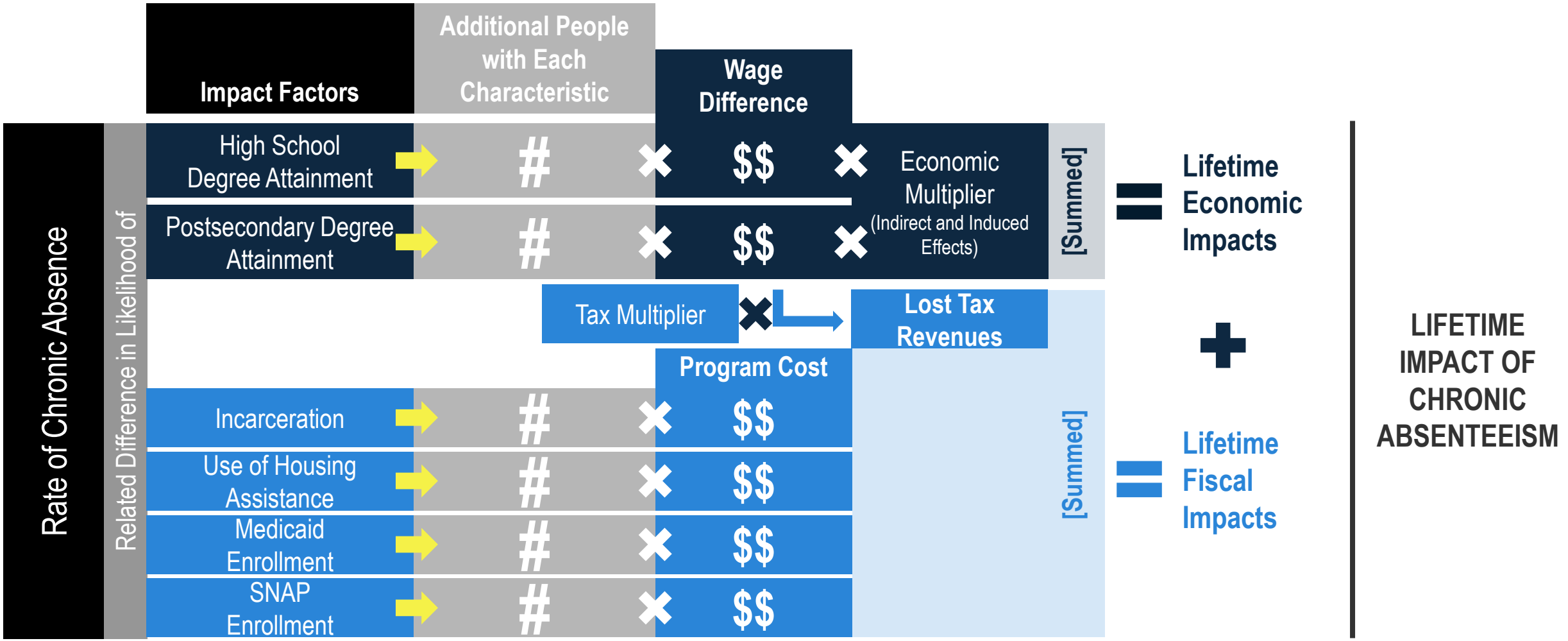
- Decreased Tax Revenue to State and Local Governments
- Increased Likelihood of Incarceration and Associated Costs
- Increased Likelihood of Housing Insecurity and Associated Costs
- Increased Likelihood of Medicaid Use and Associated Costs
- Increased Likelihood of Reliance on Social Support and Associated Costs

THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC ABSENCE BY AGE



Source: Referenced Research Studies and Reports

MODEL STRUCTURE



Task 1
Research Trends and Climate

- Assess Local Trends and Changes in Key Education Metrics
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ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Lost Productivity Resulting from Behaviors Impacted by Chronic Absence

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION | DIRECT LOSS

2024

Among the high school seniors in the spring of 2024, 42.4 percent (an estimated 11,305 students) were chronically absent. Chronic absenteeism and related behaviors are expected to result in lower graduation rates for these students compared to their peers.

As a direct result, an estimated 783 students did not graduate in 2024 who otherwise might have, if not for the effects of chronic absenteeism. Taking into account the difference in the average number of working years and the average annual wage associated with obtaining a high school diploma, the lifetime loss in wages for each chronically absent senior is estimated at $359,346.

When applied to the total number of lost graduates, this equates to a cumulative lifetime wage loss of $281.3 million for the entire graduating class of 2024. This figure specifically captures the economic impact of high school dropouts and failure to graduate due to chronic absenteeism. However, additional economic losses are likely to arise from behavioral differences and other long-term outcomes associated with chronic absenteeism later in life.

	Number of Students in Graduating Class	26,668
x	Rate of Chronic Absenteeism – High School	42.4%
	Number of Chronically Absent Students in Graduating Class	11,305
x	Decrease in Graduation Rate for Chronically Absent Students	6.9%
	High School Graduates Lost to Chronic Absenteeism	783
x	Difference in Lifetime Earnings – High School Graduates vs Non-Graduates	-$359.3 K
	Total Wages Lost to Chronic Absenteeism	**-$281.3 M**

Source: Nevada Department of Education, US Census Bureau, US Social Security Administration, Referenced Studies

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION | DIRECT LOSS

2024

Among the chronically absent students in the Class of 2024 who graduated despite this behavioral pattern, only half are expected to pursue college education. While the overall immediate college attendance rate for CCSD graduates in 2024 was 50.5 percent, the rate for chronically absent graduates is even lower, estimated at 49.3 percent. Furthermore, for those who do attend, the likelihood of college persistence and eventual graduation with a four-year degree is significantly reduced compared to their non-absent peers.

When accounting for these differences and local retention rates, the Class of 2024 is projected to have 71 fewer college attendees and 158 fewer college graduates in Clark County as a result of chronic absenteeism in high school. While there is a minor gain in productivity from the local retention of individuals who might have otherwise left the area after attending or graduating college, this is outweighed by the broader economic impact. The loss of education at the postsecondary level is expected to result in a net lifetime wage loss of $168.8 million for the Class of 2024.

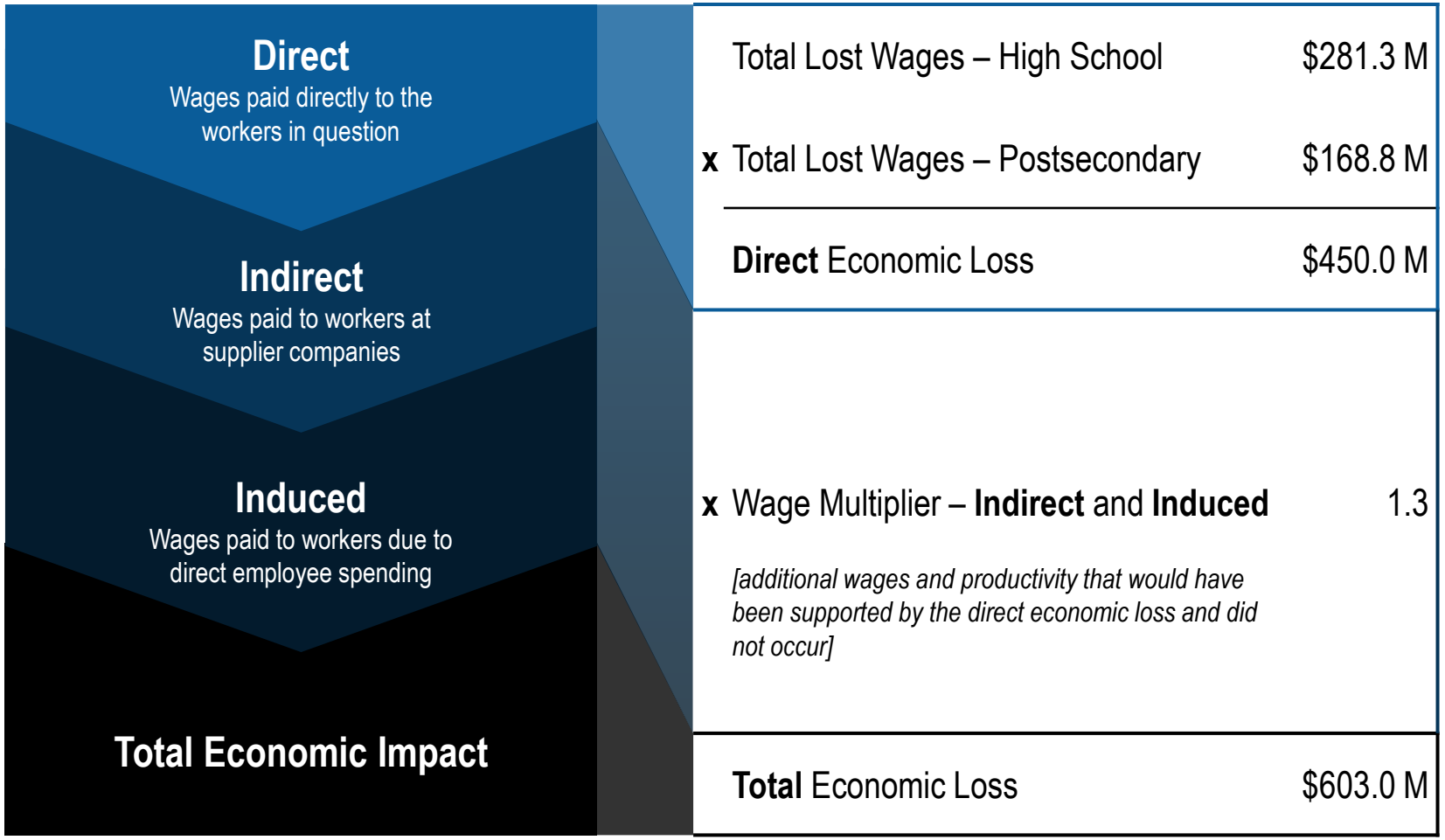
	Number of Chronically Absent High School Graduates	8,763
f(x)	Difference in College Attendance Rate – Chronically Absent vs Normal[1]	.96
	Difference in College Persistence Rate – Chronically Absent vs Normal[1]	.91
	Portion of Clark County High School Graduates Attending College Locally	39.0%
	Retention Rate of Local College Graduates	73.5%

		No College - Loss	Some College	No College - Gain
	Number of Additional Residents	71	158	57
x	Difference in Lifetime Earnings	-$475,797	-$1.5 M	$1.7 M
	Wages Lost (-) or Gained (+)	-$33.6 M	-$234.1 M	+$98.9 M
			[sum]	
	Total Wages Lost to Chronic Absenteeism			**-$168.8 M**

Source: Nevada Department of Education, US Census Bureau, National Student Clearinghouse, Nevada System of Higher Education, US Social Security Administration, Referenced Studies.
Note: At the postsecondary level, there is a unique "gain" as the result of some individuals who, had they graduated college, would have moved away, but instead remain in the area.

INDIRECT AND INDUCED PRODUCTIVITY LOSS

2024



	Total Lost Wages – High School	$281.3 M
x	Total Lost Wages – Postsecondary	$168.8 M
	Direct Economic Loss	$450.0 M
x	Wage Multiplier – **Indirect** and **Induced**	1.3
	[additional wages and productivity that would have been supported by the direct economic loss and did not occur]	
	Total Economic Loss	$603.0 M

Source: IMPLAN

The combined loss in direct wages attributable to lower levels of education among chronically absent students from the Class of 2024 in Southern Nevada is estimated at $450.0 million. This represents the direct economic loss associated with chronic absenteeism.

If these wages had been earned, they would have generated additional economic activity in Southern Nevada through two key processes. The first is the indirect impact, which includes wages paid to workers at companies that supply goods and services for the direct workers, such as lumber suppliers for construction companies. The second is the induced impact, which consists of wages paid to workers at businesses where direct workers spend their earnings, such as property managers at apartment complexes.

Assuming the mix of industries tied to these lost wages aligns with the general industry composition in Southern Nevada, the indirect and induced impacts are expected to account for approximately 34 percent of the direct wages. When these secondary impacts are included, the total estimated economic loss to Southern Nevada due to chronic absenteeism among the Class of 2024 rises to $603.0 million.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Lost Revenues and Direct Costs Resulting from Behavioral Differences and Greater Support Needs of Chronic Absentees

TAX REVENUE LOSSES

2024

In addition to the decrease in economic productivity resulting from reduced wages in Southern Nevada, there is a corresponding loss in tax revenue across all jurisdictions associated with lower earnings. Although Nevada does not impose a direct personal income tax, individuals with higher incomes typically contribute more through property taxes, retail sales and use taxes, and other taxes tied to their spending. These tax revenues, especially those collected in Clark County, are critical for funding essential services and programs in the same area, such as public education. Both state and local tax revenues are impacted by this wage gap. The total loss in tax revenue at the state, county, and sub-county levels for 2024 is estimated at $23.7 million. This loss is further broken down by differences in education levels and wage gap categories, as detailed in the analysis below.

		No HS Degree	HS Degree	Some College	Bachelor's Degree +
	Annual Income	$26,969	$35,403	$47,033	$81,995
x	Local Tax Multiplier	.057	.058	.056	.052
x	Average Working Years	51	49	47	45
	Lifetime Tax Revenues	$78,197	$100,036	$124,114	$191,135
	Difference in Revenues	$21,839	$24,079	$67,021	
x	Count of Lost Graduates/Students	783	71	158	
sum	Lost Tax Revenue	$17.1 M	$1.7 M	$10.6 M	

	Total Lost Tax Revenue	$29.4 M
-	Tax Revenue Retained due to Local Resident Retention	$5.7 M
	Net Tax Revenue Loss	**$23.7 M**

Source: US Census Bureau, US Social Security Administration, IMPLAN

INCARCERATION COSTS

2024

		No HS Degree	No College	No College Degree
	Number of Additional Residents	783	88	198
x	Difference in Incarceration Rate	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
	Additional Incarcerated Individuals	6.0	0.6	0.1
			[sum]	
	Total Additional Incarcerated Individuals due to Chronic Absenteeism			6.7
	Average Length of Incarceration (years)			12.8
x	Average Annual Cost of Incarceration per Person			$33,350
	Total Lifetime Incarceration Costs due to Chronic Absenteeism			**-$2.9 M**

There is a statistically significant and well-documented correlation between educational attainment and incarceration rates. In the Nevada prison system, the majority of incarcerated individuals have an education level at or below high school. While many factors contribute to this trend, they are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Given the lower average educational attainment among chronically absent students compared to their peers, these students are more likely to face incarceration over the course of their lifetime. In 2024, the average annual cost of incarcerating an individual in Nevada was $33,350. Based on typical behavioral patterns regarding incarceration rates and lengths of incarceration by educational attainment, chronic absenteeism among the Class of 2024 is projected to result in an additional $2.9 million in incarceration costs.

Source: US Census Bureau, Nevada Department of Corrections, Referenced Studies

HOUSING ASSISTANCE COSTS

2024

		No HS Degree	No College	No College Degree
	Number of Additional Residents	783	88	198
x	Difference in Program Use Rate	5.2%	0.8%	2.5%
	Additional Residents Participating	41.0	0.7	5.0
			[sum]	
	Total Additional People Using Housing Assistance due to Chronic Absenteeism			46.6
	Average Length of Housing Assistance Use (Years)			6.0
x	Average Annual Cost of Housing Assistance per Person			$400
	Total Lifetime Housing Assistance Costs due to Chronic Absenteeism			**-$111,943**

Among individuals with lower levels of educational attainment, there is a higher likelihood of relying on housing assistance. While several factors contribute to this trend, the most prominent is that lower income levels typically lead to reduced housing stability. Since chronic absenteeism directly contributes to lower educational attainment and, consequently, lower average annual wages, it also plays a role in driving housing instability and reliance on housing assistance programs.

For the Class of 2024, based on absenteeism rates and total class size, it is estimated that 1,069 local individuals will attain lower levels of education. Using the relative rate of housing assistance utilization among individuals with similar educational levels, approximately 46.6 individuals from this group are expected to rely on housing assistance at some point in their lifetime. Assuming the average duration of use and the current cost of housing assistance, the total projected cost for the Class of 2024 over their lifetimes is $111,943.

Source: US Census Bureau, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Clark County Social Services, Referenced Studies

MEDICAID COSTS

2024

		No HS Degree	No College	No College Degree
	Number of Additional Residents	783	88	198
x	Difference in Enrollment Rate	18.3%	6.4%	12.4%
	Additional Enrolled Individuals	143.2	5.6	24.5
			[sum]	
	Total Additional Medicaid Enrollees due to Chronic Absenteeism			173.3
	Average Length of Medicaid Use (years) – Full-Time Equivalent			1.6
x	Average Annual Cost of Medicaid per Full-Time Enrollee			$5,737
	Total Lifetime Medicaid Costs due to Chronic Absenteeism			**-$1.6 M**

In addition to higher rates of incarceration and reliance on social services such as housing assistance, lower levels of educational attainment are also strongly associated with increased Medicaid enrollment rates. Several factors, including health-related predispositions and limited access to proper nutrition, contribute to a cyclic relationship with Medicaid use among Southern Nevada residents. Lower educational attainment often exacerbates these factors.

For example, individuals without a college degree are less likely to secure jobs offering comprehensive private health coverage or may earn wages too low to afford copays and deductibles for necessary healthcare. As a result, they are more likely to rely on Medicaid at some point in their lifetime. Among the 11,305 chronic absentees in the Class of 2024, it is estimated that 173 additional individuals will enroll in Medicaid over their lifetimes due to the effects of chronic absenteeism. This is projected to result in a total additional Medicaid cost of $1.6 million.

Source: US Census Bureau, Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, Referenced Studies

SNAP COSTS

2024

		No HS Degree	No College	No College Degree
	Number of Additional Residents	783	88	198
x	Difference in Program Use Rate	13.0%	3.2%	7.5%
	Additional Residents Participating	101.5	2.8	14.8
			[sum]	
	Total Additional People Using SNAP due to Chronic Absenteeism			119.1
	Average Length of SNAP Use (years)			2.0
x	Average Annual Cost of SNAP per Person			$166
	Total Lifetime SNAP Costs due to Chronic Absenteeism			**-$40,320**

Similar to housing assistance and Medicaid, individuals with lower levels of educational attainment have higher rates of participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"). As a result, chronic absentees from the Class of 2024 who attain lower levels of education due to their absenteeism are expected to rely on SNAP at increased rates.

Although SNAP participation rates for individuals with less than a high school degree are not as high as Medicaid rates, they remain significant at 27.1 percent. This is nearly double the 14.2 percent participation rate for individuals with a high school diploma. Considering the 13.0 percent difference between these groups, along with similar patterns for those with postsecondary education, it is estimated that an additional 119 individuals from the Class of 2024 will rely on SNAP assistance during their lifetime due to chronic absenteeism. Based on typical duration and cost of use, this reliance is projected to result in a $40,320 lifetime cost to Southern Nevada.

Source: US Census Bureau, US Department of Agriculture, HuffPost, Referenced Studies

TOTAL QUANTIFIED FISCAL COSTS

2024

The fiscal impact of chronic absenteeism among the Class of 2024 in Southern Nevada includes two primary categories: (1) lost tax revenue resulting from reduced wages due to lower levels of educational attainment among chronic absentees, and (2) increased costs for incarceration and social services due to higher usage rates among this population.

In addition to the lost economic productivity previously discussed, reduced wages associated with chronic absenteeism are projected to result in a loss of $23.7 million in tax revenue at the state, county, and sub-county levels over the lifetime of the Class of 2024. Furthermore, the increased likelihood of incarceration and reliance on social assistance programs, including housing assistance, Medicaid, and SNAP, is estimated to contribute an additional $4.6 million in direct costs.

Combined, these fiscal impacts account for a total estimated lifetime fiscal loss of $28.3 million for the Class of 2024, expressed in current dollars. When factoring in expected wage inflation and rising program costs over time, the total fiscal impact on state, county, and sub-county budgets is anticipated to exceed the current-dollar estimate.

$28.3 M

Total Costs

$23.7 M	+	$2.9 M	+	$111.9 K	+	$1.6 M	+	$40.3 K
Lost Tax Revenue		Additional Incarceration Costs		Additional Housing Assistance Costs		Additional Medicaid Costs		Additional SNAP Costs

Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
Research Trends and Climate	**Identify Resulting Factors**	**Assess Potential Impacts**	**Report Salient Findings**
Assess Local Trends and Changes in Key Education Metrics	Assess Strength of Studied Relationships	Calculate Current and Expected Future Impacts of Chronic Absenteeism in Clark County	Synthesize Results of Impact Calculations
Perform Subject Research	Compare Viability of Causal Mechanisms and Applicability to Current-Day Southern Nevada	Consider and Calculate Alternate Trends	Present Range of Possible Near-Future Scenarios
Find Reputable, Significant, and Quantifiable Links Among Subjects of Interest	Integrate Findings Across Varied Geography, Methodology, and Timing	Account for Unquantifiable Impacts on Overall Direction and Magnitude of Results	Summarize Overall Findings
			Address Likely Additional and Related Concerns

OVERALL QUANTIFIED IMPACTS

The Total Combined Impact of Lost Economic Productivity and Direct Fiscal Costs Over Time

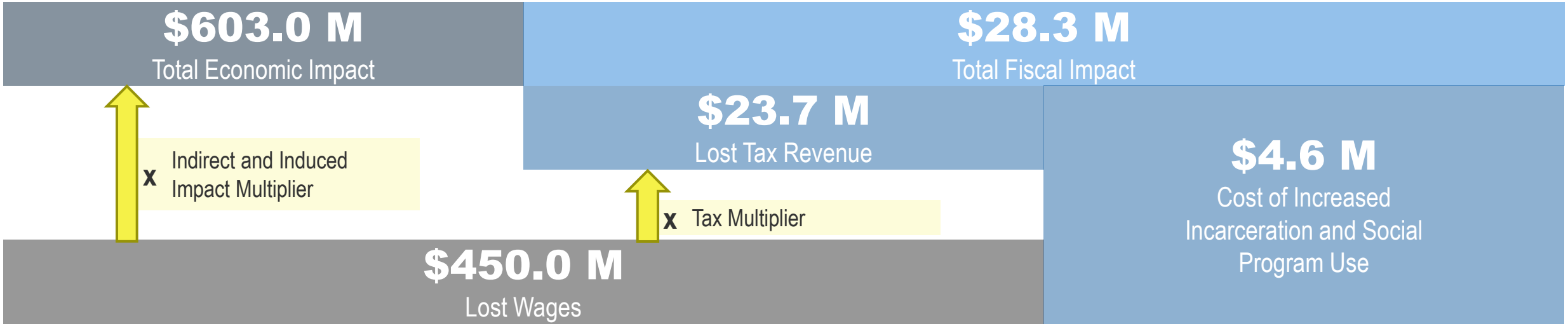
TOTAL IMPACT OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

2024

Across both quantifiable impact categories, the total losses and costs associated with chronic absenteeism over the lifetime of the Class of 2024 are projected to reach $631.3 million. While other COVID-related factors, such as rising costs of providing social programs and an increasing wage gap between individuals with varying educational attainment, have contributed to this total, the sharp increase in chronic absenteeism is a key driver. Even if costs per service and wage disparities by education level had remained constant, the 12.7 percent increase in the chronic absenteeism rate among high school students would still have significantly raised the lifetime costs for this group in Southern Nevada. Although the rate of absenteeism has gradually declined from its post-COVID peak in 2022, the pandemic-era surge has already led to a substantial accumulation of these costs in recent years, further amplifying the long-term fiscal and economic burden on the region.

$631.3 M

Total Quantifiable Impact of Chronic Absenteeism in 2024



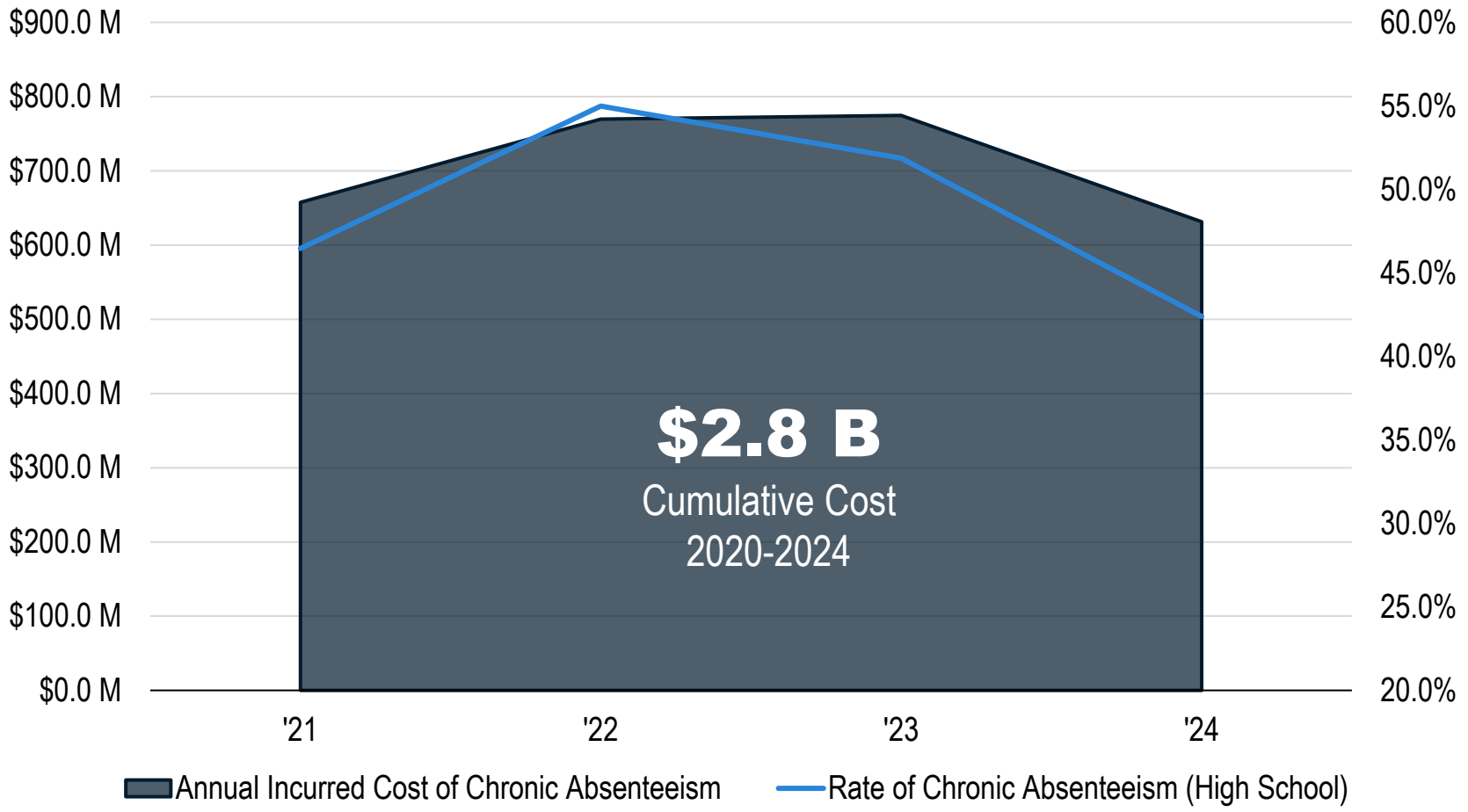
THE COST OF COVID-19

2020 - 2024

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote instruction, chronic absenteeism rates at all school levels in CCSD surged. In 2022, the first full year of in-person instruction post-pandemic, 40.6 percent of CCSD students were chronically absent. Among high school students in Southern Nevada, the rate was even higher, with 55.0 percent classified as chronically absent that year.

This represents a significant increase from 2019, when the district-wide chronic absenteeism rate was 21.9 percent, and the high school rate was 29.7 percent. While these rates have since declined slightly—falling to 31.3 percent district-wide in 2024—the lifetime costs associated with chronic absenteeism from the past four years have already been incurred for each graduating class, totaling just over $2.8 billion.

It is estimated that pandemic-related factors, including the sharp rise in chronic absenteeism, account for more than a third of this total cost (43.0 percent or $1.2 billion).

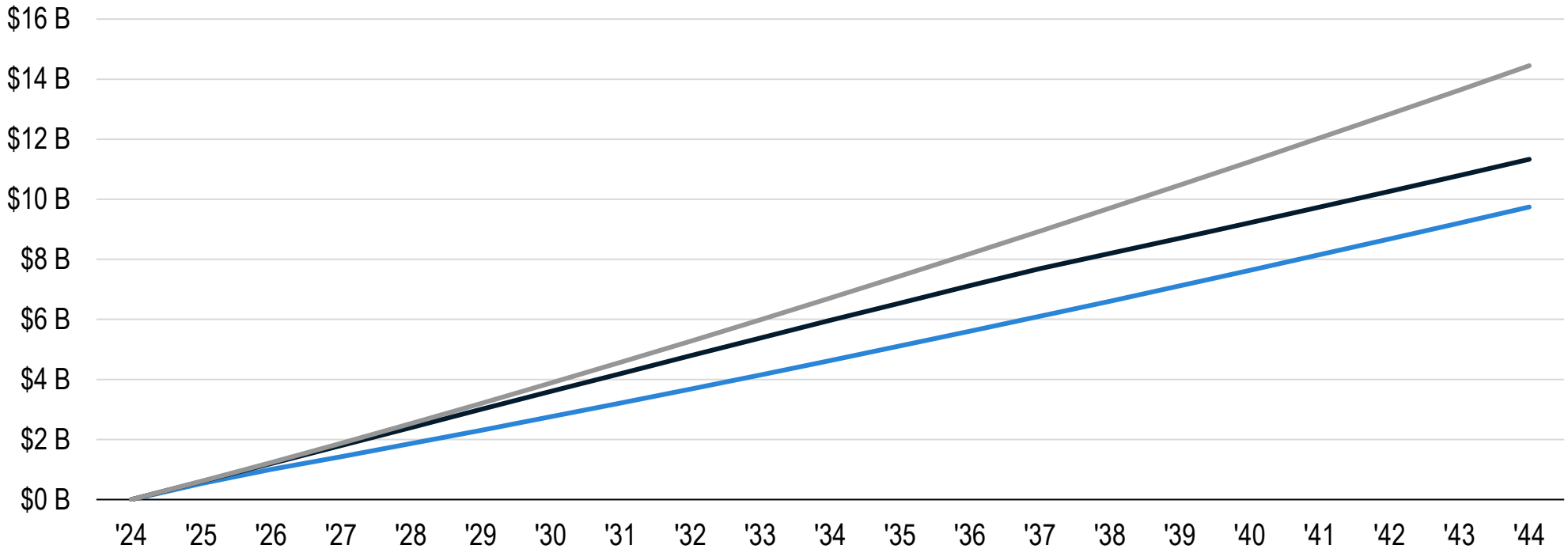


Note: All estimates of historic impacts are shown in 2024 dollars.

20-YEAR IMPACT BY RATE OF CHRONIC ABSENCE

2024 - 2044

Although the lifetime cost of increased chronic absenteeism resulting from behavioral changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic in past graduating classes is relatively fixed, the potential for annual increases and the accumulation of these costs in future graduating classes presents significant economic challenges. For the current 2025 school year alone, if the chronic absenteeism rate from 2024 persists, Southern Nevada is projected to face a lifetime cost of $610.0 million attributed to the class of 2025. By 2044, the accumulated costs of chronic absenteeism are estimated to reach $14.4 billion. However, targeted and intentional intervention to reduce the chronic absenteeism rate to pre-COVID levels by 2027 could significantly mitigate these costs. Such efforts are projected to reduce lifetime costs by $4.7 billion, yielding a tax revenue and cost savings of $179.6 million and an economic benefit of $4.5 billion to Southern Nevada.



Cumulative 20-Year Loss by Scenario:

-$14.4 B
Current Rate

-$11.3 B
Slow Decline

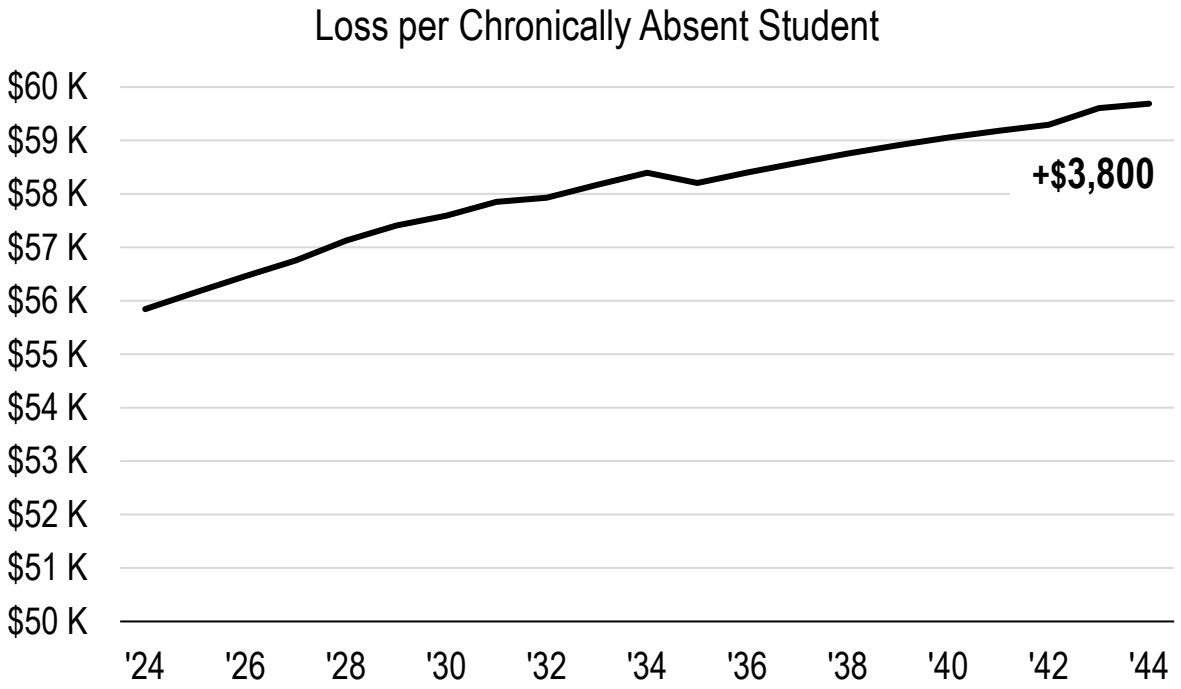
-$9.7 B
2027 Intervention

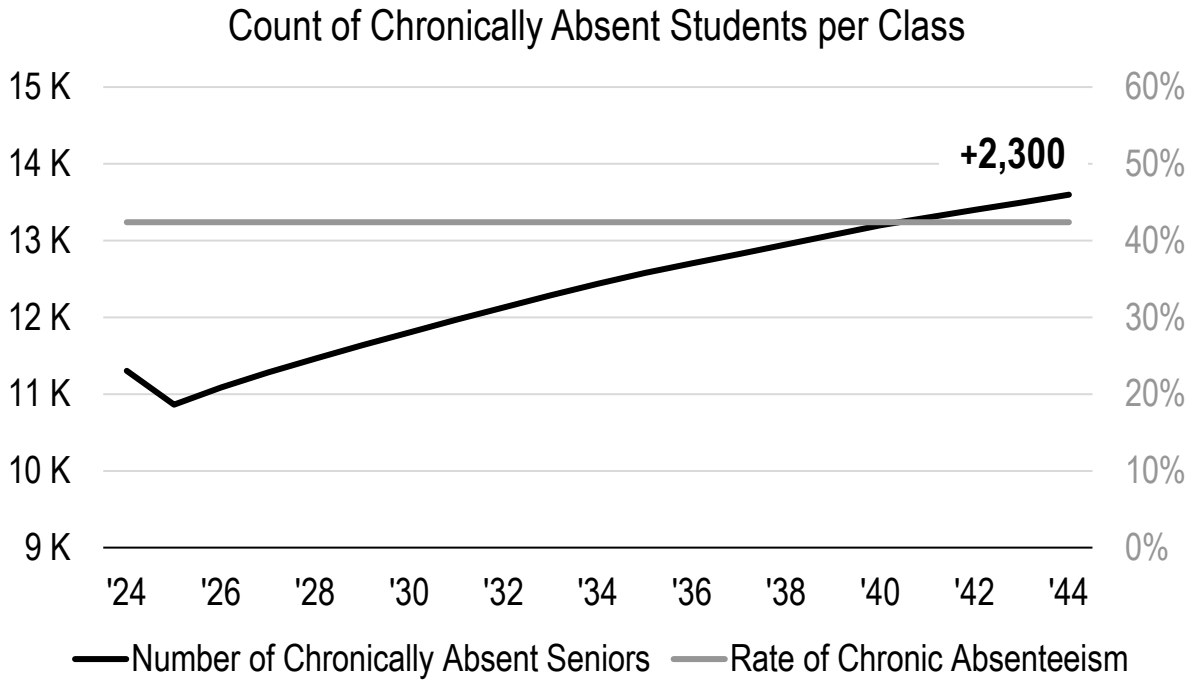
Note: All estimated future impacts are shown in 2024 dollars.

IMPACT BY RATE OF CHRONIC ABSENCE

2024 - 2044

Beyond the additional costs associated with the COVID-driven rise in chronic absenteeism lies the significant financial burden of not actively working to reduce the rate of chronic absence. Even if the current rate of chronic absenteeism remains unchanged, the lifetime costs associated with each graduating class from CCSD are projected to rise due to increases in both population and service costs. Over the next 20 years, the population in Clark County is expected to grow by 26.9 percent, leading to an increase of approximately 5,409 students per graduating class in CCSD. As a result, even with a steady chronic absenteeism rate, 20.3 percent more students will contribute to its associated costs in two decades. Additionally, the cost per student is anticipated to rise by 6.9 percent over the same period. Combined, these factors will drive a 33.1 percent increase in annual costs related to chronic absenteeism, underscoring the importance of implementing targeted interventions to reduce absentee rates and mitigate these escalating financial impacts.





Note: All estimated future impacts are shown in 2024 dollars.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The General Cost of Lost Education, Unquantifiable Losses and Costs Associated with Chronic Absenteeism, and Social Impacts

UNQUANTIFIABLE ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Anticipated and Unknown Losses in Economic Productivity

In addition to the net lifetime wage loss associated with differences in educational attainment between students who were chronically absent in high school and their peers who were not, there are numerous economic factors that could not be directly quantified for this analysis. For some of these factors, a lack of substantial data on the relationship between chronic absenteeism and the economic impact prevented a detailed examination. In other cases, sufficient data exists to identify the presence of an impact, but there is insufficient research to fully analyze its connection to chronic absenteeism. A number of these factors, including those cited below, are expected to contribute to negative economic outcomes. As such, the estimates provided in this analysis likely reflect a conservative approximation of the true economic impact.

Slower Innovation and Progress

A less-educated populace results in a diminished concentration of essential knowledge in areas such as science, mathematics, and English. This reduction in understanding of core subjects limits the ability to comprehend and influence the world and hinders effective communication of new ideas. Consequently, the pace of innovation and progress is significantly slowed.

Lower Productivity per Educator

When students frequently miss class, the effectiveness of educators is diminished. Since educators for core subjects are allocated based on enrollment, funding, and related factors, their impact is maximized when students are consistently present and actively engaged in their education. This principle similarly applies to the utilization of fixed assets, where efficiency is closely tied to consistent and effective student participation.

Loss of Economic Activity During Incarceration

In addition to the direct costs of incarceration, there is a significant loss of societal participation and economic productivity both during incarceration and in the period following release. The increased incarceration of chronically absent individuals also signifies an unquantified loss of time and potential work output that could have otherwise contributed to economic and social advancement during that period.

Source: Nevada Department of Higher Education

UNQUANTIFIABLE FISCAL IMPACTS

Anticipated and Unknown Direct Costs and Governmental Revenue Losses

In addition to the fiscal losses resulting from chronic absenteeism discussed in the fiscal impact section, there are numerous fiscal impact factors that were not quantified in this analysis. For some of these factors, exclusion was due to insufficient data or a lack of clarity regarding the magnitude of their impact. Others were omitted because the available research did not provide adequate quantity or strength to quantify the relationship between chronic absenteeism and subsequent behaviors driving these fiscal impacts. These excluded factors, detailed below, are all likely to impose additional costs on local governments and communities due to chronic absenteeism. Therefore, their omission suggests that the actual fiscal impacts of chronic absenteeism may exceed the estimates calculated in this analysis.

Cost of Additional Dependents

Among high school dropouts, the likelihood of early motherhood (ages 16–24) is 37.8 percent—six times that of college-bound peers and 8 percent higher than high school graduates. A majority of the fathers, 60 percent, are not married to these young women. Consequently, these children are more likely to grow up in low-income single-parent households, increasing their reliance on social support programs.

Higher Lifetime Healthcare Costs

Across decades and countries of research, a strong positive correlation exists between higher education and improvements in both the length and quality of life. Individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to rely on publicly subsidized healthcare programs such as Medicaid, and the financial burden of their care extends beyond increased utilization rates to include higher associated healthcare costs.

Detainment and Policing Costs

As evidenced by their higher incarceration rates, chronic absentees are more likely to face detention in adulthood. This results in increased costs associated with operating local detention facilities, heightened police activity, and broader social disruption.

Source: Referenced Studies

SOCIAL IMPACTS

Factors that Impact the Southern Nevada Community and Society at Large

Decreased Societal Connection

In general, adult life poses greater challenges for individuals with lower educational attainment compared to their peers. These challenges include societal impacts such as reduced income, behavioral difficulties, and increased social isolation. Amid a broader rise in loneliness and isolation across the United States, those without college degrees are particularly less likely to maintain friendships or engage in social activities.

Decreased Socioeconomic Mobility

For high school dropouts, the time, money, and opportunity cost of pursuing a master's degree to work in a desired field or earn a competitive income are more likely to be prohibitively high compared to their high school- or college-educated peers of the same age. As chronic absentees progress further into adulthood, this opportunity gap may continue to widen, further reducing the potential for upward socioeconomic mobility.

Higher Likelihood of Adverse Experiences

Across home life, health, and personal circumstances, individuals with lower educational attainment are more likely to experience adverse outcomes in adulthood. These include increased rates of illicit drug use, reduced stability in relationships and family life, and higher incidences of serious diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular conditions. Collectively, these factors contribute to a markedly diminished quality of life.

Decreased Community and Civic Involvement

Individuals with lower levels of educational attainment are significantly less likely to vote, volunteer, or engage in citizens' initiatives. This results in reduced social connectedness, a greater likelihood of isolation and polarization, and diminished social and political representation, ultimately creating a demographic imbalance in influence and voice.

Source: Referenced Studies

DATA SOURCES

US Census Bureau IPUMS Database

The Hamilton Project

Nevada Department of Education

US Social Security Administration

Nevada System of Higher Education

IMPLAN

UNLV Center for Business and Economic Research

US Census Bureau American Community Survey

National Student Clearinghouse

Nevada Department of Corrections

The College Board

US Department of Housing and Urban Development

Clark County Social Services

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission

US Department of Agriculture

HuffPost

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