

NOVEMBER 2025

**INSIGHTS FROM A CITYWIDE SURVEY
OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

WHY DO STUDENTS MISS SCHOOL?

**What San Antonio
Families Are Telling Us**

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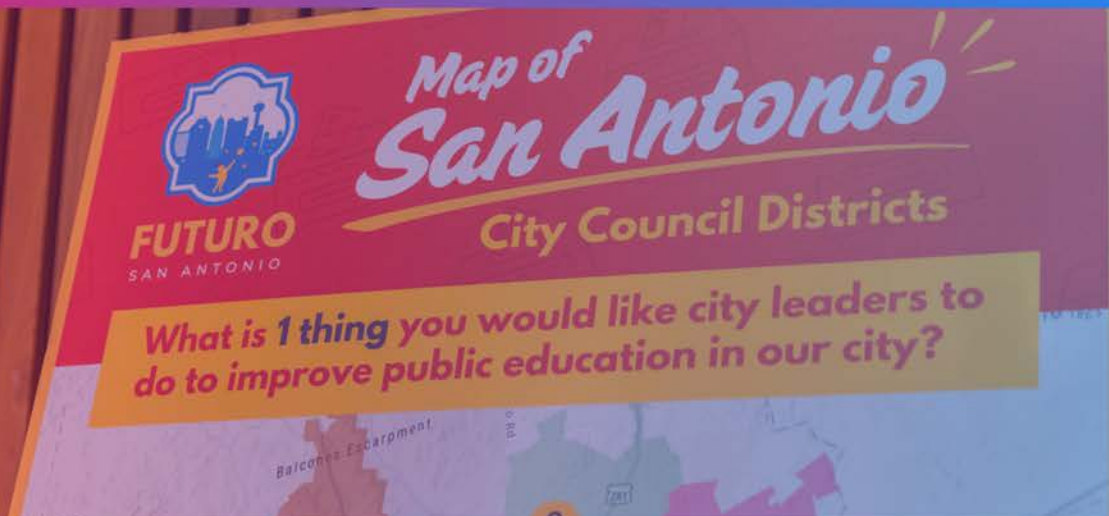


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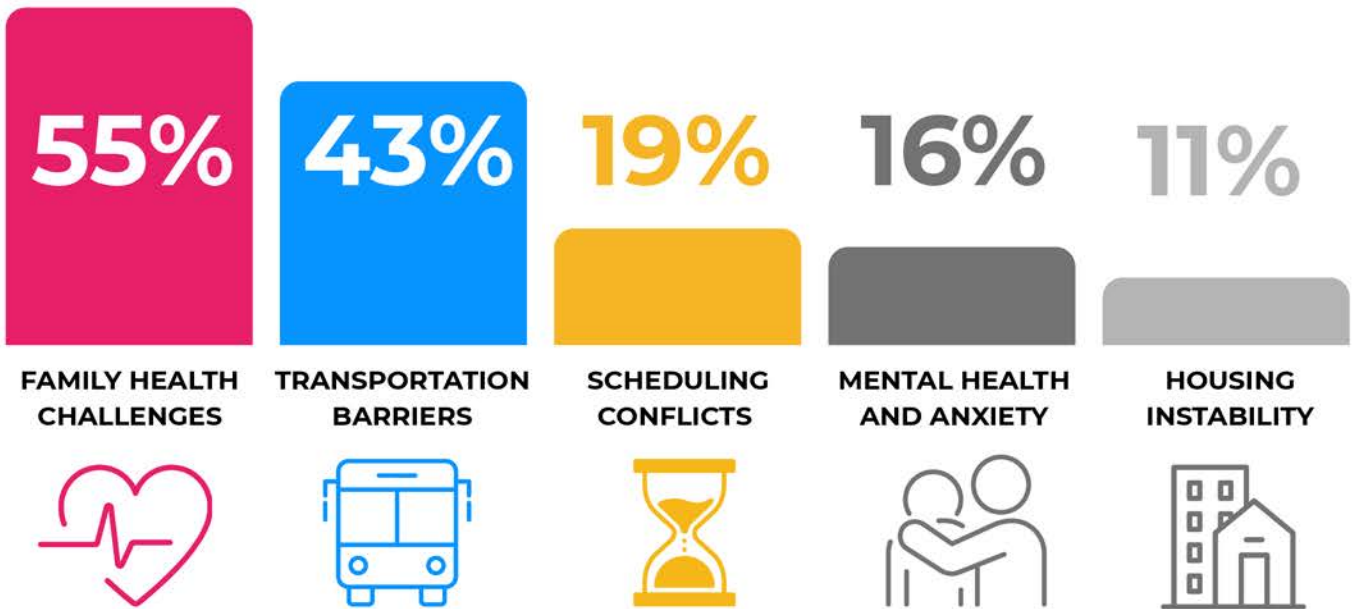
OVERVIEW

When students miss school, they miss opportunities to learn, connect, and thrive. But attendance challenges don't happen in isolation — they're shaped by the realities families face across our city.

This Fall, Futuro San Antonio took the time to **listen to families in our city.** We surveyed **505 parents and caregivers of PK–12 students** citywide to learn the reasons why students miss school. Their responses reveal a clear picture: health challenges, transportation barriers, and work and caregiving conflicts are the top three reasons why students miss school.

This report highlights what families are telling us and what it will take for city and county leaders to help every child show up ready to learn.

WHY FAMILIES SAY STUDENTS ARE MISSING SCHOOL



“ WHAT FAMILIES ARE SAYING

Every month, the question becomes: **do I pay \$30 to feed my kids or ride the bus?**

I have **4 kids and 1 car**. Getting to school is ok, but **don't have anyone to pick them up** when I'm at work.

My kid says he just **doesn't see the connection between school and getting a job in the future**. It's hard for me to help him see that it's worth it.

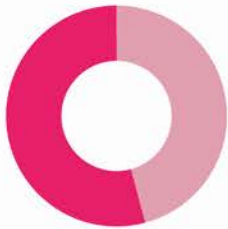
My daughter has struggled so much with **school stress** that I can't get her to get out of bed on some days.

I hear some kids say, *I missed the bus. I'm already late, so what's the point?* and go home.



BREAKING DOWN THE DATA

Health challenges are the **leading cause** of absenteeism.



55% of parents cite illness or ongoing medical needs — the top reason across every part of the city.

Hispanic and Latino parents report this at even higher rates (61%), compared to 50% of White parents and 45% of Black parents.

Transportation barriers make it **hard for families** to get to school on time.

22% cite unreliable or lengthy commutes. **12%** say their school bus route doesn't work for them.

Families on the East and West Sides are most affected — with 26% naming transportation as a key barrier.

Work and caregiving conflicts matter too.

Nearly one in five parents (nearly 20%)



say household schedules make it difficult for students to attend regularly.

Mental Health and anxiety are major overlooked, drivers.

16% report mental or behavioral health needs as a barrier.

23% say their child experiences anxiety about school — and one in ten cite it as a top reason for missing class.

Housing instability compounds the challenge,

11% of families cited access to affordable housing as a priority.



Parents on the East Side are 2.4x more likely than those on the West Side to say a recent move or unstable housing leads to absences.

WHAT FAMILIES NEED FROM LOCAL LEADERS

When asked what actions local elected officials should take:

- **36%** want expanded before- and after-school programs to match family schedules.
- **30%** want more mental health services for students.
- **27%** support free public transportation passes for students.
- **25%** want more bus routes or adjusted stops to reduce long commutes.

WHAT FAMILIES ARE ASKING FOR

FREE TRANSPORTATION FOR SCHOOL. GAS PRICES ARE HIGH, AND **THAT WOULD HELP** ALOT.

CLEAR DATA ON HOW MISSING SCHOOL AFFECTS GRADES. THAT COULD REINFORCE WHAT WE TEACH AT HOME.

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EARLY-MORNING SCHOOL-PROGRAMS. WORKING PARENTS NEED TO ARRIVE EARLY AT TWORK. OUR LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON IT.



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Improving attendance isn't about blame — it's about building systems that work for families.

When San Antonio city and county leaders invest in transportation, housing stability, after-school care, and mental health supports, **students show up.**

Futuro San Antonio will continue to elevate the voices of parents and caregivers, share data that drives action, and advocate for cross-sector solutions that give every child the opportunity to learn, every day.

Join our movement and take the pledge at Futuro-SA.org/ShowUpSA because it's time to #ShowUpSA.





Futuro San Antonio is a coalition of education professionals, families, and advocates dedicated to ensuring every child in San Antonio has equitable access to high-quality public schools.

To learn more about us, visit
Futuro-SA.org