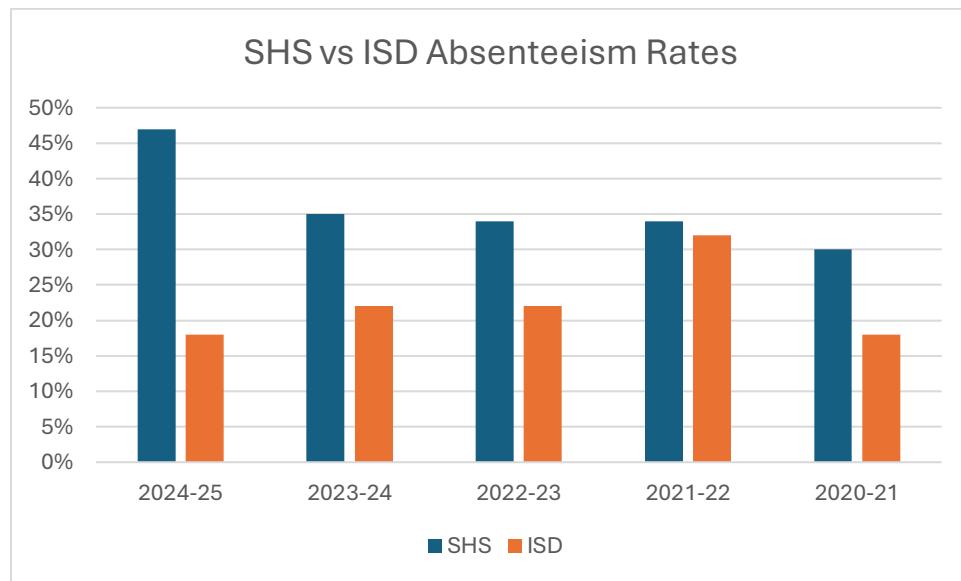


## Why Attendance Matters at SMS & SHS

Showing up matters more than we sometimes realize. Public data from MISchoolData tracks *chronic absenteeism*, defined as missing more than 10% of the school year—and it highlights a growing challenge at Saugatuck High School.

Over the past five years, chronic absenteeism at SHS has consistently been higher than the ISD average, with a noticeable upward trend:



At the middle school level, attendance has generally been much stronger. Chronic absenteeism has stayed in the single digits, with SHS exceeding the ISD average only twice—most recently in 2024–25 (+8%), and previously in 2020–21 (+6%). In the years between, SMS was below the ISD rate.

We know families are juggling a lot; health, stress, schedules, and life in general. This isn't about blame. It *is* about awareness. Every day a student is in school, they gain instruction, connection, and momentum that's hard to replace.

As parents, small choices, prioritizing attendance when possible, encouraging consistency, and communicating with the school, can make a real difference for our kids and our community.

Together, we can help turn this trend around. ❤️