Leveraging Afterschool To Improve School Attendance

Peer Learning Webinar

April 19, 2011
Webinar Agenda

- **Background (Hedy)**
  - Participants
    - What are your field(s) of expertise?
    - At what levels do you work?
  - Overview of Attendance & Connection to Afterschool/Out of School Time

- **Presentations**
  - Jeanne Miller, Carbon and Schuylkill SHINE 21st Century After-School Program, Pennsylvania
  - Rob Clark, The Family League, Baltimore MD
  - Ellie Mitchell, The Maryland Out of School Time Network

- **Open Discussion**
Why Does Attendance Matter for OST?

1. Research and field experience show Out of School Time (OST) can help improve attendance in school.
2. Focusing on attendance can improve collaboration with schools.
3. By ↑school day attendance, OST can improve the academic success and reduce drop-out.
Research Shows Impact of Quality OST

- 7th and 8th graders attending afterschool programs at a Boys & Girls Club skipped school fewer times, increased school effort and gained academic confidence. (2009)
- Afterschool participants attending Pathways to Progress in Minneapolis and St. Paul came to school an average 18.4 more days than their peers. (2004)
- School-day attendance improved for students in California’s Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program. Students absent 10% of the year came another 11 days. (2002).
Why We Think OST/ Afterschool affects School Attendance

Good OST programs engage in activities that contribute to better school attendance such as:

- **Provide socialization and peer attention** in a supervised venue
- **Re-establish the link between effort and results**—in a non-school activity
- **Engage students in challenging activities** that help them develop persistence.
- **Provide consistent contact** with caring, stable adults.
- **Increase a sense of belonging** at school.
What Do We Mean By School Attendance?

**Chronic Absence**: missing 10% or more of school over the course of an academic year for any reason. Research shows 10% is associated with declining academic performance. No standard definition exists.

**Satisfactory Attendance**: missing 5% or less over the course of an academic year for any reason.

**Truancy**: refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state, according to NCLB.

**Average Daily Attendance**: the percent of enrolled students who attend school each day.
Among poor children, chronic K absence in predicted lower 5th grade achievement.

Source: National Center for Children In Poverty
Chronically absent 6th graders are much less likely to graduate.

Dropout Rates by Sixth Grade Attendance
(Baltimore City Public Schools, 1990-00 Sixth Grade Cohort)

- Severely Chronically Absent: 56.3%
- Chronically Absent: 41.6%
- Not Chronically Absent: 25.7%

Source: Baltimore Education Research Consortium SY 2009-2010
9th grade attendance predicts graduation for students of all economic backgrounds.

Note: This Chicago study found attendance was a stronger graduation predictor than 8th grade test scores.

A 407 alert is issued when student misses 10 consecutive days or 20 days over a 40 day period. It misses more sporadic absence. 1 out of 5 elementary school children were chronically absent.

Most schools only track average daily attendance and truancy. Both can mask chronic absence.

Varying levels of chronic absence among 10 Baltimore schools with 95% ADA
Data Usually Exists But Is Not Being Used Effectively

- In most schools, teachers take roll every day.

- In most districts, attendance for each student is recorded electronically. It may not, however, yet be used to track and monitor chronic absence.

- Most states (except for CA, CO, ILL, NJ, NY) have attendance in their state longitudinal student data bases though it is rarely used to calculate chronic absence.
Data Can Help Identify Programmatic Solutions

- Examine attendance patterns by classroom, grade, school, neighborhood or sub-population.

- If chronic absence is unusually high for a particular group of students explore what might be common issues (unreliable transportation, community violence, asthma, unnecessary suspension for non-violent offenses, lack of engaging curriculum, foreclosures, etc.)

- If chronic absence is unusually low for a high risk population, find out what they are doing that works.
↑ attendance involves a 3-tiered approach that fits with most reform efforts

**This level targets:**

- Students who are chronically absent & habitually truant
- Students at-risk for poor attendance and/or with rising absence rates
- All Students in the school

**Optimal distribution:**

- **High Cost**
  - Recovery Programs
  - 5-15% of a school’s students

- **Medium Cost**
  - Intervention Programs
  - 15-20% of a school’s students

- **Low Cost**
  - Universal/Preventative Initiatives and Programs
  - 65-100% of a school’s students
Improving attendance takes an integrated approach

Universal Attendance Supports

• Safe and supportive school environment
• Inviting and engaging classroom environment
• Intentional family involvement and participation
• Purposeful coordination with school health using frequent health absences as a criteria for referrals
• Collaborate with afterschool programs to build a culture of attendance
  • A school plan and budget that reflects high attendance priorities
  • Accurate roll taking every day in a caring manner
  • Rewards for good and improved attendance
  • Rapid parent contact for unexplained absences

Individual Assessments and Intervention

• Refer chronically absent/truant students for intervention
• Identify and remove barriers
• Provide on-going support

Recovery Strategies

• Interagency Staffing
• Case management and wrap-around services
• Referral as last resort for court-based intervention

Baltimore Student Attendance Work Group adapted from Scott Perry, Attendance Audit, Oregon
## OST Attendance Matters Theory of Change

### Inputs

| Research showing impact of A/S attendance on school attendance |
|---|---|
| Strategies for A/S directors and programs to build culture of attendance, eg: |
| - Taking daily individual attendance; |
| - Talking to kids and parents about attendance; |
| - Incentives; |
| - Programming that encourages strong a/s attendance |
| - Using data to target recruitment, action |
| - Buddies, clubs, transport partners, etc |

| Strategies for A/S -school collaboration for attendance, eg: |
|---|---|
| - Shared understanding s/language |
| - Interface with school data systems |
| - Structured linkage with parents/ families |
| - Homework time |
| - Data/info sharing and joint action planning |
| - Financial incentive created / disincentives reduced |

| Attendance tracking systems for individual daily attendance in A/S |
|---|---|
| Outreach and pd |
| - Education leaders |
| - District /jurisdictional leaders |
| - School leaders |
| - A/S Directors/leaders |
| - A/S staff |

### Intermediate outcomes mid-term

- Awareness of value of a/s re: school attendance, by school a/s personnel, ed leaders, and relevant legislative / funders
- Programs institutionalize a culture of attendance; track individual daily attendance
- Respective roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and communications identified and formalized b/w school and a/s; obstacles to data-sharing addressed
- Disincentives to recruiting low-school attendance kids neutralized

### Longer term outcomes

- Schools/districts integrate school data and OST attendance data
- Programs routinely submit OST attendance data to districts
- Districts/schools provide programs with useable data
- A/S uses data for targeted strategies
- New research provides basis for testing/improving intervention/support strategies

### Result

- Improved after school attendance
- Improved school day attendance
- Improved engagement of parents with schooling
Chronic Absence TA Project

- 3 Networks (MD, PA, Utah)
- Developed site level action plans
- Creating attendance data & practice survey administered across sites
- Co-develop professional development modules for afterschool providers, school leadership, parents & juvenile justice.
- Tools: Making the Case Handout & A/S Self Assessment (also available at www.attendanceworks.org)
The SHINE 21st Century After-School Program is located in rural Northeast PA and provides educational services to children in 5 public schools and 4 parochial schools covering over 430 square miles. Almost 500 children and 1,000 adults are served throughout the school year and during summer program. SHINE is funded through the PA Department of Education 21st Century learning Centers, Pa Commission on Crime and Delinquency and various state and local funders.

**Yearly Attendance Goal:** 70% of regular participating students in the SHINE program who demonstrate attendance problems will show improved attendance

**Long Term Goal:** Improved Attendance = Improved Academics
Demographics

• **100%** are referred for academic reasons

• **86%** come from low income families

• **35%** are already in/were in Children & Youth or Foster Care

  • **23%** have IEP’s  (Special Education Eligible)

• **74%** have special/remedial needs (Title 1, ADHD, IEP)

  • **17%** are minorities

• **57%** of SHINE students have participated in the program 2 – 4 years

Logistics

• Centers:  M-F 3:30pm- 6:30pm

  • Professional Development:  
    1\textsuperscript{st} Friday of the Month

• Kindergarten:  Weekly Home Visits

  • Summer Programs:  
    Camps & 1\textsuperscript{st} – 5\textsuperscript{th} grade home visits

• Family Education Plans

• Individual Education Plans
A Community Success Story... Students, Family, Teachers

Hub for Professional Development
• SHINE Teachers, Interns, Local School Districts

Transition into 4 year State Universities
• Interns enroll into PASSHE through Articulation Agreements

LCCC Education Interns
• Pre Service Teaching Laboratory

High School Seniors
• Tutors/Mentors transition to SHINE intern if interested in teaching

Family Involvement
• 100% create Educational Plans and Workforce Goals

9th-12th Grade Mentor Tutor
• Service Learning to expose students to teaching & high priority STEM & Community College

6th to 8th Career Camps
• STEM Career Camps

Pre K - 6th Grade Summer Learning Experiences
• Home Visits
• Summer Camps

1st to 3rd After School
• Victory Garden for Success

4th to 5th After School
• STEM High Priority Occupations

Birth to 5 School Readiness
• Parents as Teachers
• Head start
• Home Visiting

SHINE Kindergarten
• Kindergarten children who need academic support receive home visits

1st to 3rd After School
• Pre Service Teaching Laboratory

2nd to 3rd After School
• Tutor/Mentor
• Service Learning to expose students to teaching & high priority STEM & Community College

3rd to 5th After School
• STEM High Priority Occupations

4th to 5th After School
• STEM High Priority Occupations

5th to 6th After School
• STEM High Priority Occupations

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Current Strategies

- Parents Sign a Contract – Parent Teacher Agreement & Handbook
- No School / No SHINE
- Build a Positive Relationship with Parents Before any Attendance Problems Occur
- Middle of the Year Letter – Importance of Attendance – Policy Reminder
- Incentive Program: 90%

Data Collection

- Center Teachers Fax weekly – Entered into Data Base for the Month – Teachers Receive Monthly Reports
- Report Includes: Average Daily Attendance and the % Each Child Attends During the Month
- Teachers Receive Report Cards i.e. Attendance Every Nine Weeks From Schools
- Independent Evaluator
Results

- **70-73%** of the students enrolled in SHINE Program over the past 5 years improved, didn’t need to improve or maintained gains in attendance from previous years.

- **88%** of the students were regular attendees as compared to below 60% nationally for 21st Century After-School Programs.

- **77%** of the parents surveyed over the past 5 years said the SHINE program improved school attendance.

- **93%** of the students who attended SHINE 90 days or more had exceptional or satisfactory attendance.

- **96%** of the students over the past 5 years were promoted to the next grade.

- **78%** of the SHINE students demonstrated improvement in academic performance.

- Math Report Card Grades: Over the past 4 years, 88% of the children had passing grades, out of those children almost 60% were Above Average or Superior grades.

- Reading Report Card Grades: over the past 4 years, 83% had passing grades, out of those children 48% had Above Average or Superior.

*Students in the SHINE Program are highly at-risk for chronic absenteeism*

**Improve Attendance = Improved Academics**
Lessons Learned

1. Intentional Plan to collect and & evaluate data

2. Set goals – Teachers (Centers) – Parents (Incentives)

3. Summer Home-Visiting Program- Parent Involvement

4. The more students attend SHINE the better they do in school.
Improving School Attendance Through Afterschool

PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS FROM THE FAMILY LEAGUE OF BALTIMORE

ROB CLARK (RCLARK@FLBCINC.ORG)
Family League of Baltimore City

- Pulls together city, state, federal, and private resources to support children, youth and families.

- Provides OST funding ($4.5 million) and support to 35 organizations serving over 5,000 youth.

- Collaborate in building systems to support program quality, leveraging of resources (supper), evaluation and expanding access to OST and the number of OST opportunities in Baltimore.
What Baltimore’s Data Tells Us

- Youth who attend OST programs are more likely to attend school at a higher rate than the general school population.

- Youth who attend OST programs are less likely to be Chronically Absent than the general school population.

- We are reaching students with high needs – based on FARM eligibility.
### SY2010 Chronic Absenteeism Comparison

#### BCPS-SY2010 vs. Baltimore OST Participants - SY2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Missed more than 20 days (%)</th>
<th>Missed more than 20 days (%)</th>
<th># missed more than 20 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Diagram

- **Elementary**
  - BCPS: 13.9%
  - OST: 8.8%
  - Total: 999
  - # missed more than 20 days: 88

- **Middle**
  - BCPS: 17.5%
  - OST: 9.8%
  - Total: 622
  - # missed more than 20 days: 61

- **High**
  - BCPS: 41.9%
  - OST: 34.9%
  - Total: 172
  - # missed more than 20 days: 60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>BCPS - SY2010</th>
<th>OST Participants - SY2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missed fewer than 5 days (%)</td>
<td>Missed fewer than 5 days (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Free and Reduced Meals Eligibility Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>BCPS - SY2010 % FARM Eligible</th>
<th>OST Participants - SY2010 % FARM Eligible</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th># FARM Eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What We Don’t Know

- If we are reaching youth with a history of chronic absence (what is their attendance before being enrolled in OST).

- If youth attendance improves after they are enrolled in OST.
Increasing Intentionality

- Increasing student attendance a key outcome for OST programs (has become primary outcome established by Baltimore City)

- Continue to prioritize neighborhoods and schools with high risk indicators, including C.A.

- Pushing programs to recruit / enroll youth with history of chronic absenteeism – must outline plans in application.
Plans for FY12

• Partner with Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) to conduct further data analysis

• Provide more timely access to data (through partnership with City Schools and BERC) so programs can better target youth and monitor success

• Provide training (MOST) on best practices for recruiting / retaining these youth

• Incentivize reaching chronically absent youth (as well as other “hard to reach” populations)
Further Data Analysis

- Compare attendance prior to OST enrollment and post OST enrollment
- Disaggregate data by school
- Disaggregate data by program
- Conduct longitudinal analysis of data
- Consider other factors
  - Program dosage
  - Type of program
  - Quality of program
Chronic Absence TA Project for Statewide Afterschool Networks: Maryland Experience

Ellie Mitchell, Director
emitchell@mdoutofschooltime.org
www.mdoutofschooltime.org
Maryland Out of School Time Network

- Comprised of community members and groups campaigning for expanded funding, more effective policies, and increased program quality to ensure all young people in Maryland have access to activities in the out of school hours that enable them to achieve in all stages of their development.

- Provides a place to exchange information, test out new ideas, share best practice information, and develop and implement a movement that successfully convinces policy makers to make the network’s goals a reality.
Why We Applied

- Attendance “movement” afoot
- Interest in connecting OST and attendance from major intermediary and funder
- Great Data
- Desire to connect more deeply with school partners
Who We Convened

- State Education Agency
- Local Education Agencies
- Baltimore Attendance Initiative
- Local Management Boards
- Funders
Learning Community
Self Assessment Tool
Attendance Survey
  ◦ Designed for Site Directors
  ◦ Afterschool Program Attendance Practice
  ◦ Afterschool Program Focus/Practice re. School Day Attendance
  ◦ Data Collection & Sharing
Targeted Power Points
- Afterschool Professionals
- Parents
- School System
- Juvenile Justice
Survey received 118 complete responses
- Developed training module
  - Piloting 4/21
- Provided input to Family League RFP
- Participating in broader statewide conversation
- Creating OST/Attendance Video
Interesting Preliminary Survey Results

- 67.8% don't receive data from schools
- 37.8% using attendance data to drop poorly attending students from programs
- 83.2% or respondents say that schools know which youth are enrolled in programs
- 60% (of the 83.2%) are not sharing their program attendance with schools
Next Steps

- Taking lessons learned from pilot to replicate training and offer in other modalities (webinar, etc.)
- Diving deeper into survey data to customize work
- Focus more on facilitating data sharing between schools and OST programs
  - Offer guidance on FERPA
  - Provide data sharing templates and models