



Reducing Chronic Absence: What Will It Take?



*An overview of why it matters
and key ingredients for improving
student attendance*



Director: Hedy Chang

Unpacking Attendance Terms

Average Daily Attendance

- The % of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.

Truancy

- Typically refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state under No Child Left Behind. It signals the potential need for legal intervention under state compulsory education laws.

Chronic Absence

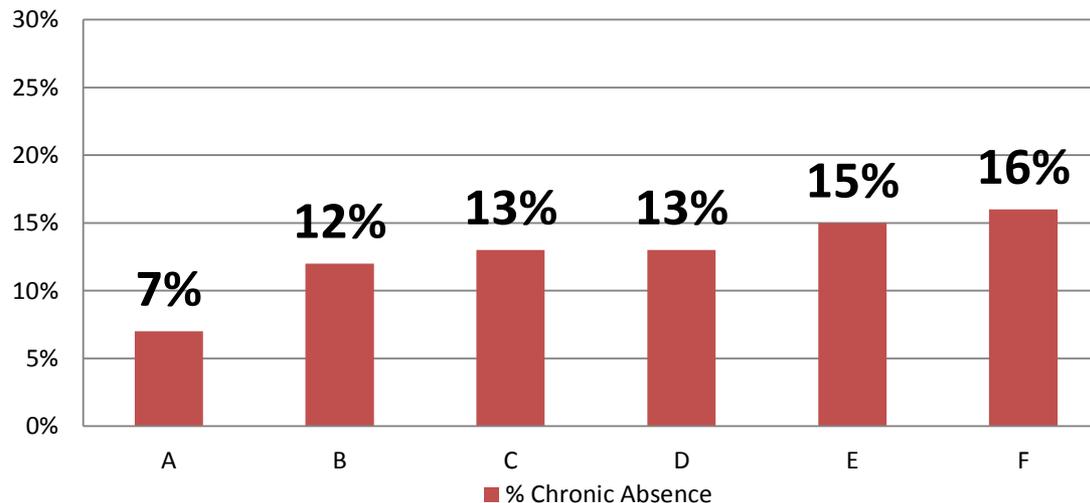
- Missing 10% or more of school for any reason – excused, unexcused, etc. It is an indication that a student is academically at risk due to missing too much school starting in Kindergarten.



Moving into Action Requires Knowing if Chronic Absence is a Problem

Most Schools Only Track Average Daily Attendance and Truancy. Both Can Mask Chronic Absence.

Chronic Absence for 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with @ 95% ADA in 2012

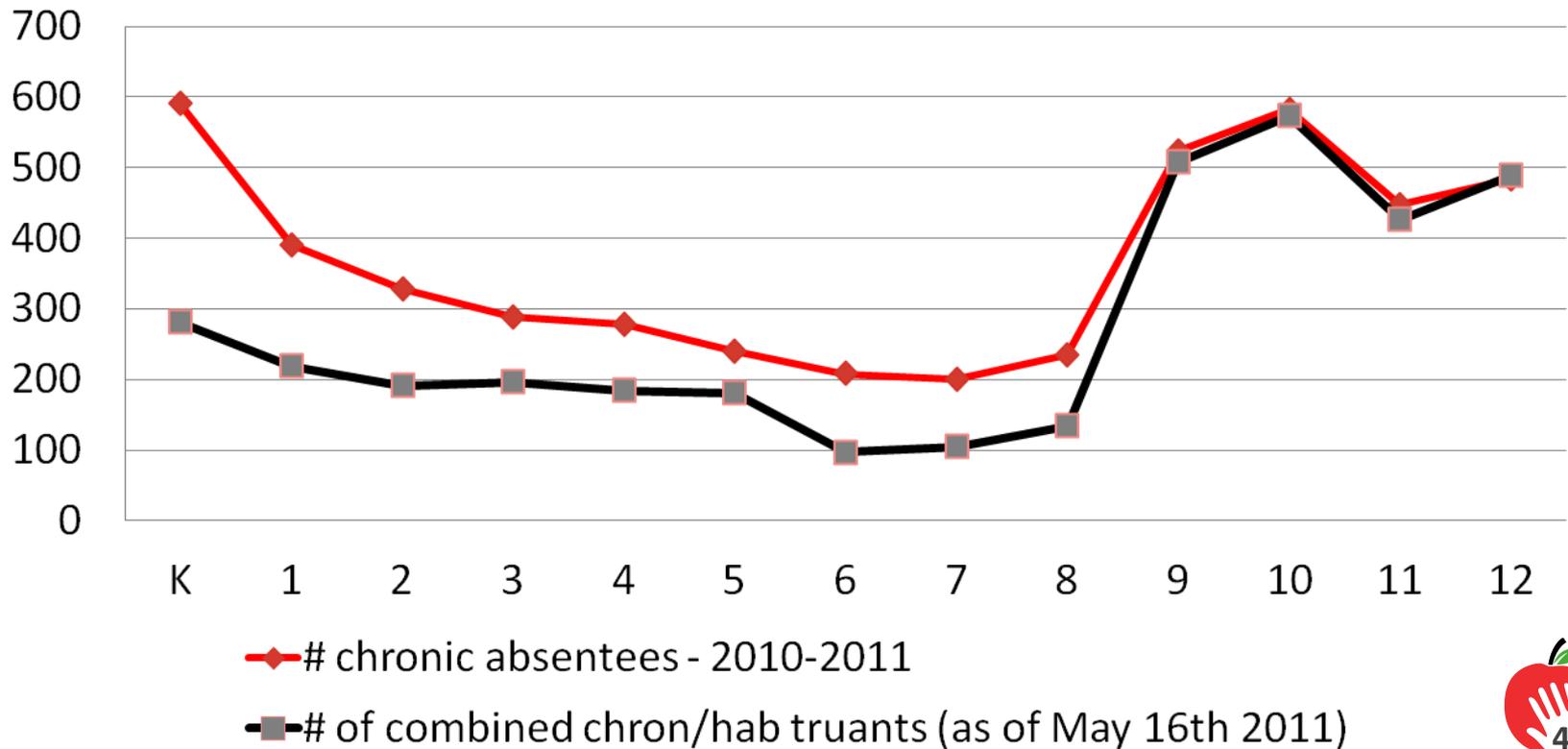


98% ADA = little chronic absence
95% ADA = don't know
93% ADA = significant chronic absence



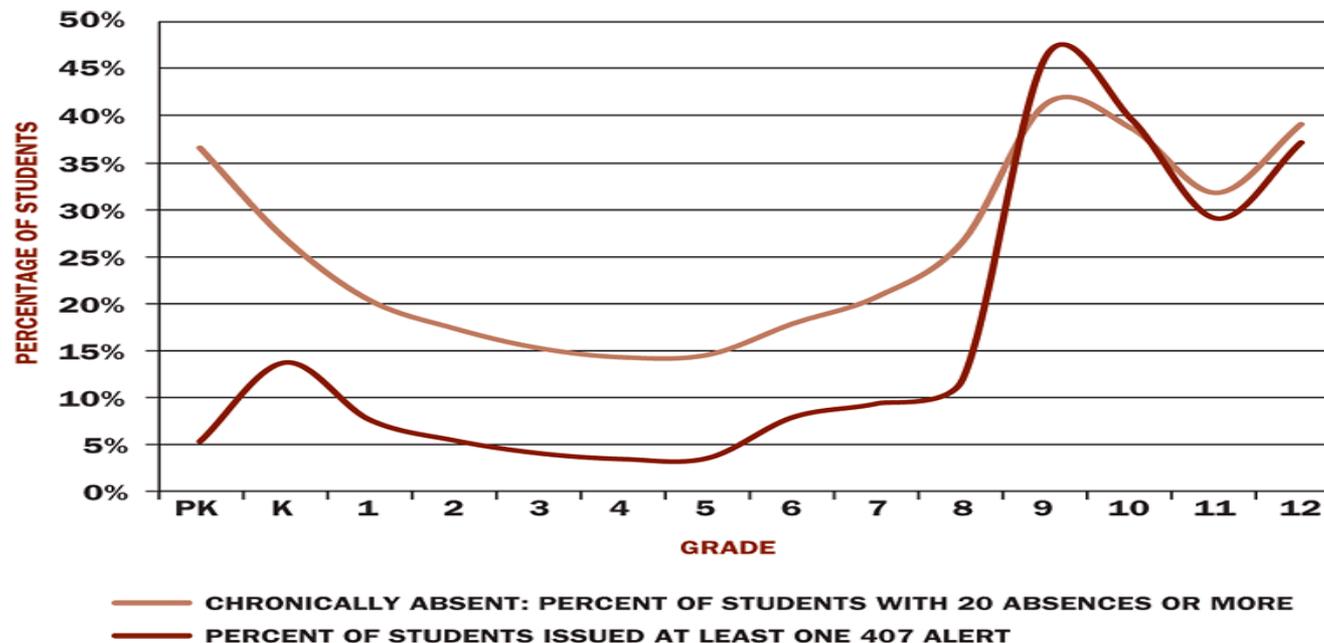
Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Number of Chronically Absent
Versus Chronically Truant Students
San Francisco Unified School District



Sporadic – Not Just Consecutive – Absences Matter

New York City Schools (2008)



- A 407 alert is issued when a 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.

Source: Nauer, K et al, *Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families*, Center for New York City Affairs New School, Oct 2008



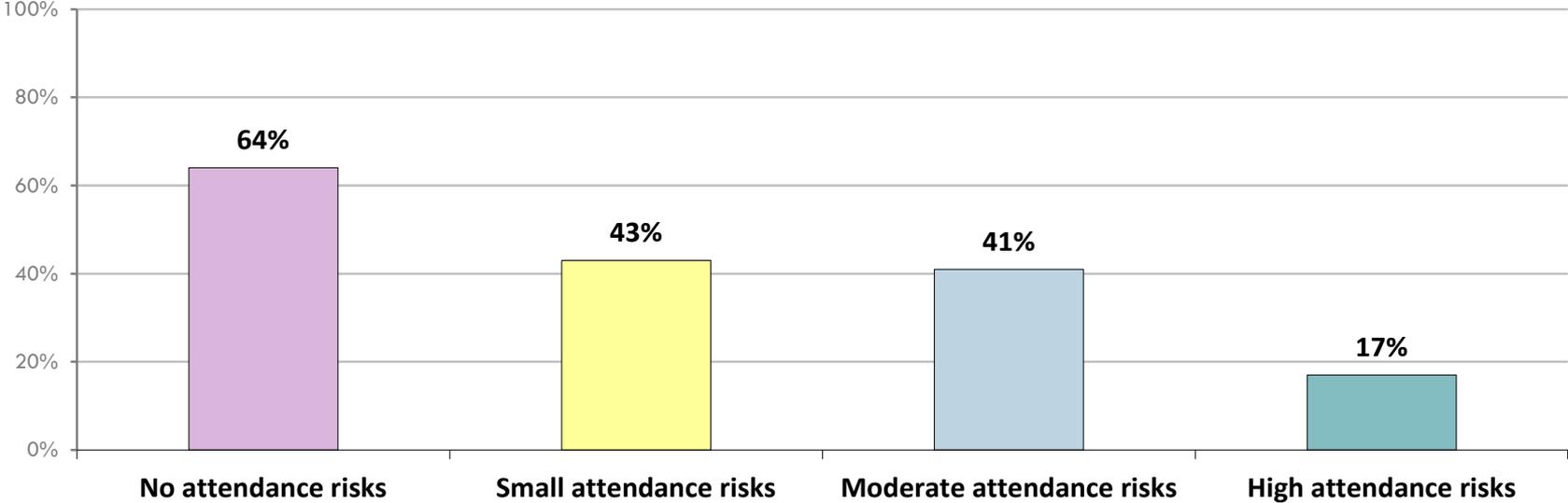
Chronic Absence: A Hidden National Crisis

- ❑ Nationwide, as many as 10-15% of students (7.5 million) miss nearly a month of school every year. That's 135 million days of lost time in the classroom.
- ❑ In some cities, as many as one in four students are missing that much school.
- ❑ Chronic absenteeism is a red alert that students are headed for academic trouble and eventually for dropping out of high school.
- ❑ Poor attendance isn't just a problem in high school. It can start as early as kindergarten and pre-kindergarten.



Students Chronically Absent in Kindergarten and 1st Grade are Much Less Likely to Read Proficiently in 3rd Grade

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and in 1st Grade



No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1st
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1st
Moderate risk	Missed 5-9% of days in 1 year & 10 % in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1st

Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)



Chronic Absence in PreK + K = Significantly Worse Outcomes

For children chronically absent in PreK & K, the Baltimore Education Research Consortium found:

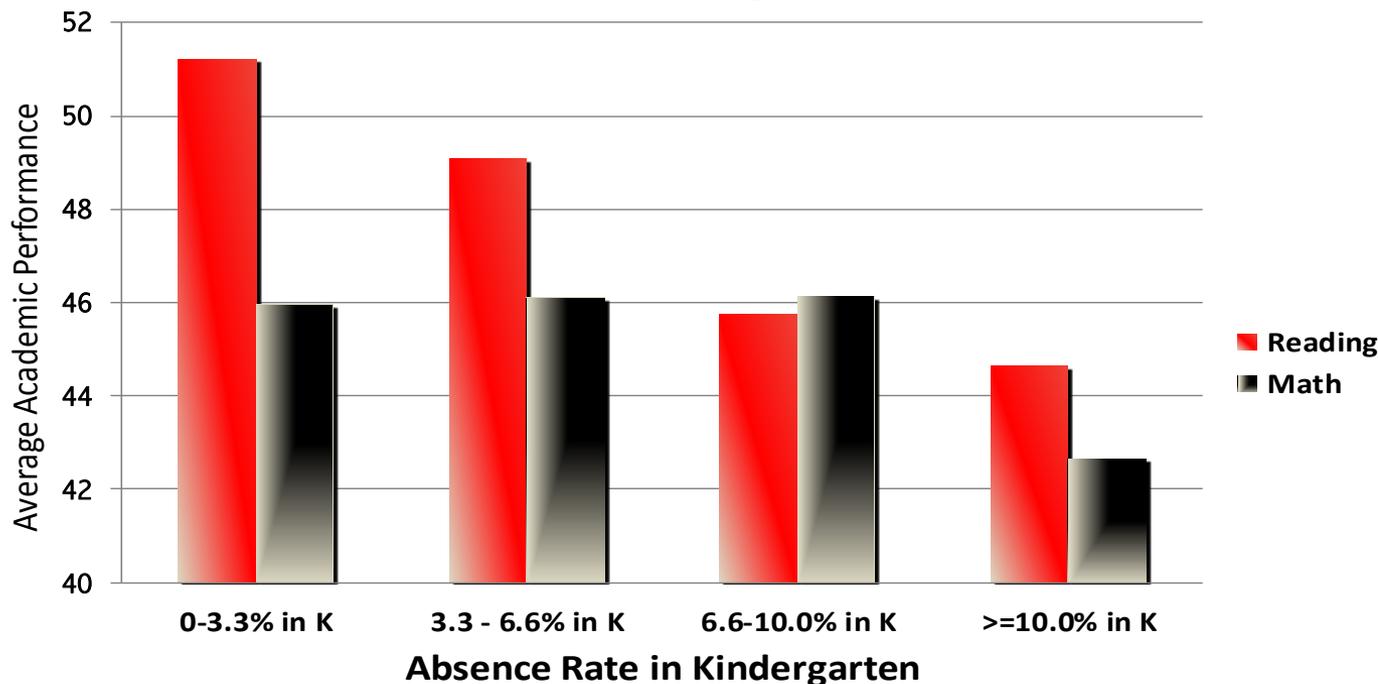
- ✓ Greater likelihood of continued poor attendance. 50% were chronically absent again in G1, 45% in G2.
- ✓ Lower outcomes in G1, G2 in reading and math, and math in G3
- ✓ More often retained (26% compared with 9% of students with no chronic absence)
- ✓ More likely to be identified as needing special education

By contrast, children who participated in Head Start had better attendance and higher 3rd grade test scores.



The Long-Term Impact of Chronic Kindergarten Absence is Most Troubling for Poor Children

5th Grade Math and Reading Performance by K Attendance for Children Living in Poverty. Academic performance was lower even if attendance had improved in 3rd grade.



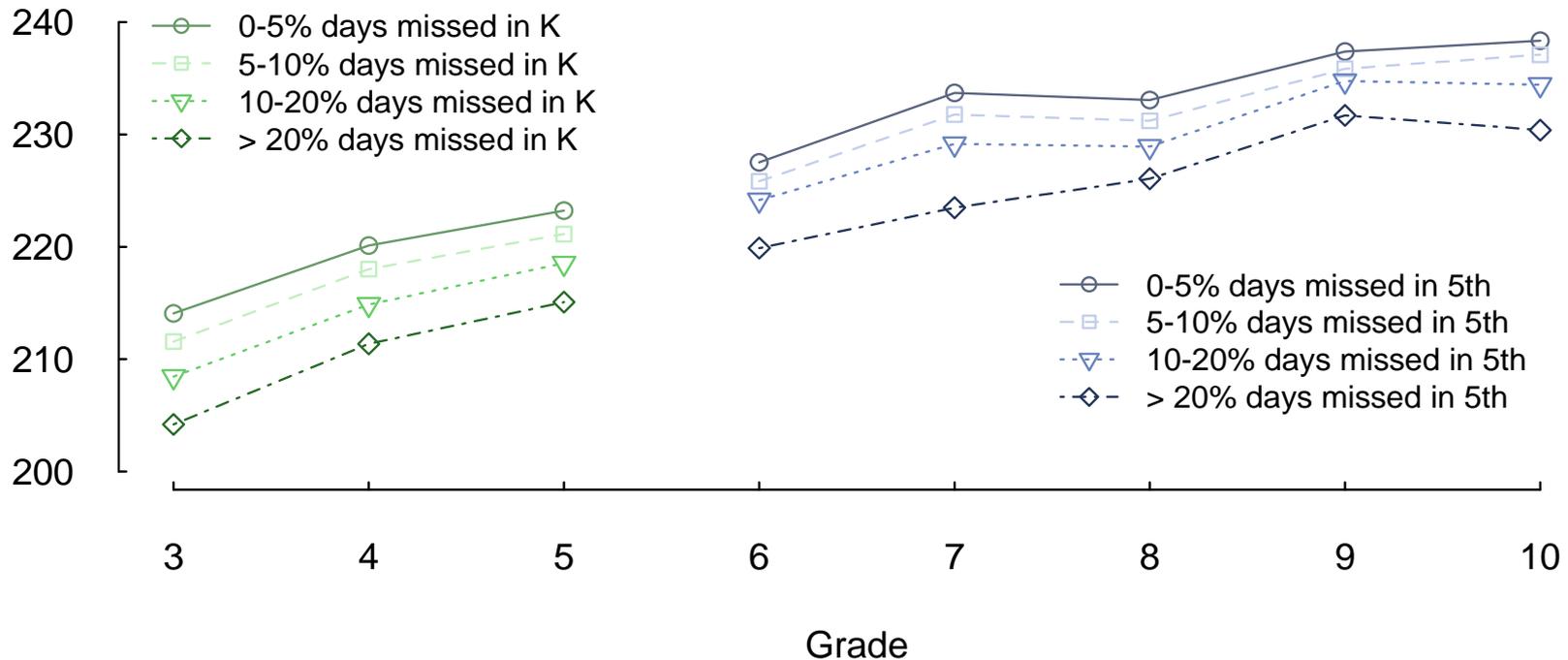
Source: ECLS-K data analyzed by National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)

Note: Average academic performance reflects results of direct cognitive assessments conducted for ECLS-K.



There Is a Clear and Consistent Relationship Between Early Attendance and Later Achievement

Average reading RIT scores for two cohorts of Oregon students, by absence rates in kindergarten and 5th grade

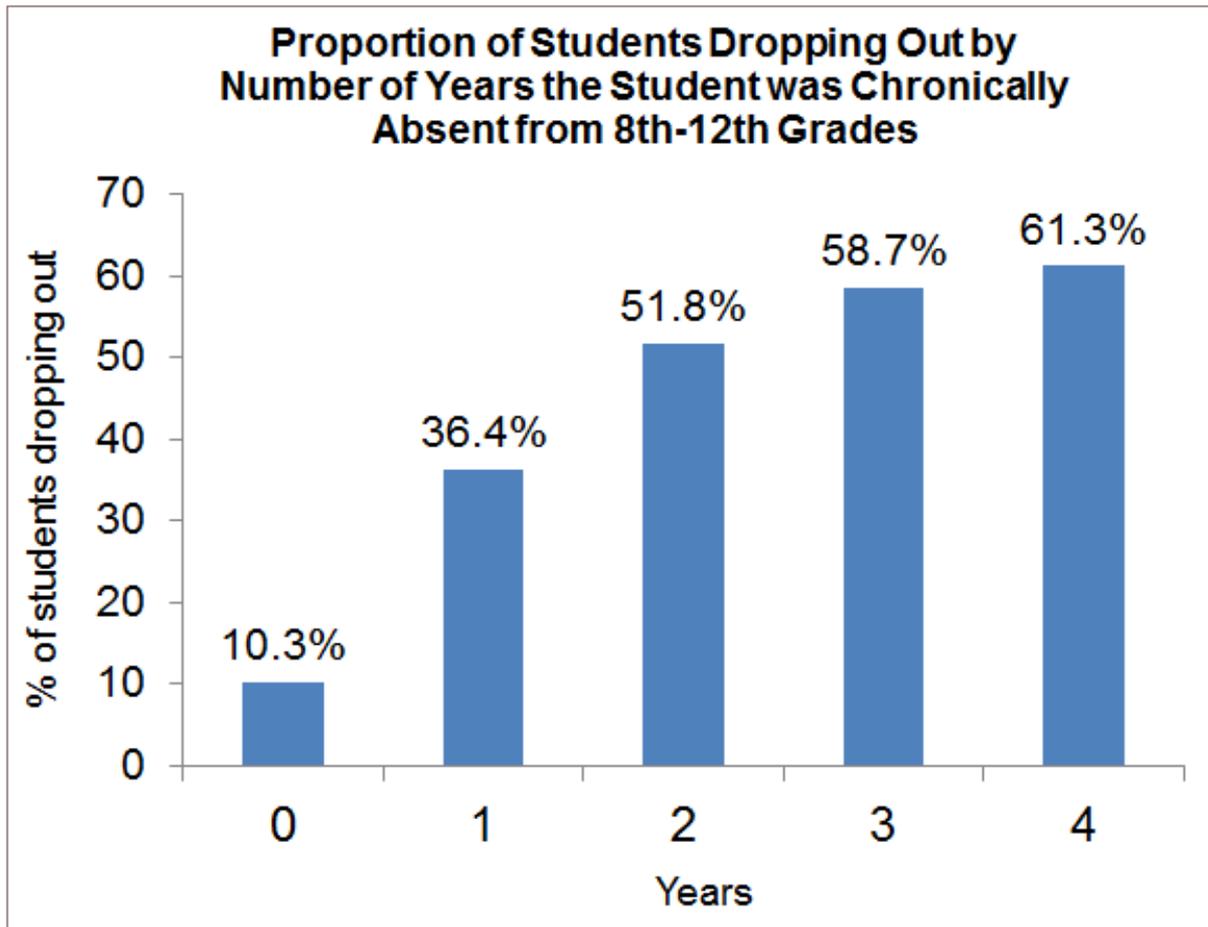


(Note: 23% of students statewide in Oregon were chronically absent)

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data, 2009-10.



The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative



With every year of chronic absenteeism, a higher percentage of students dropped out of school.

Solutions Only Work if Grounded in Understanding of What Leads to Chronic Absence

Lack of Awareness

Parents or students don't realize absences are adding up to academic risk

School lacks a strong culture of attendance

Aversion

Child is struggling academically

Lack of engaging instruction

Child is being bullied

Barriers

Lack of access to health care

No safe path to school

Poor transportation

Special thanks to Dr. Robert Balfanz, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD for providing this framework.



Universal Strategies for School Communities

Recognize Good and Improved Attendance

Engage Students and Parents

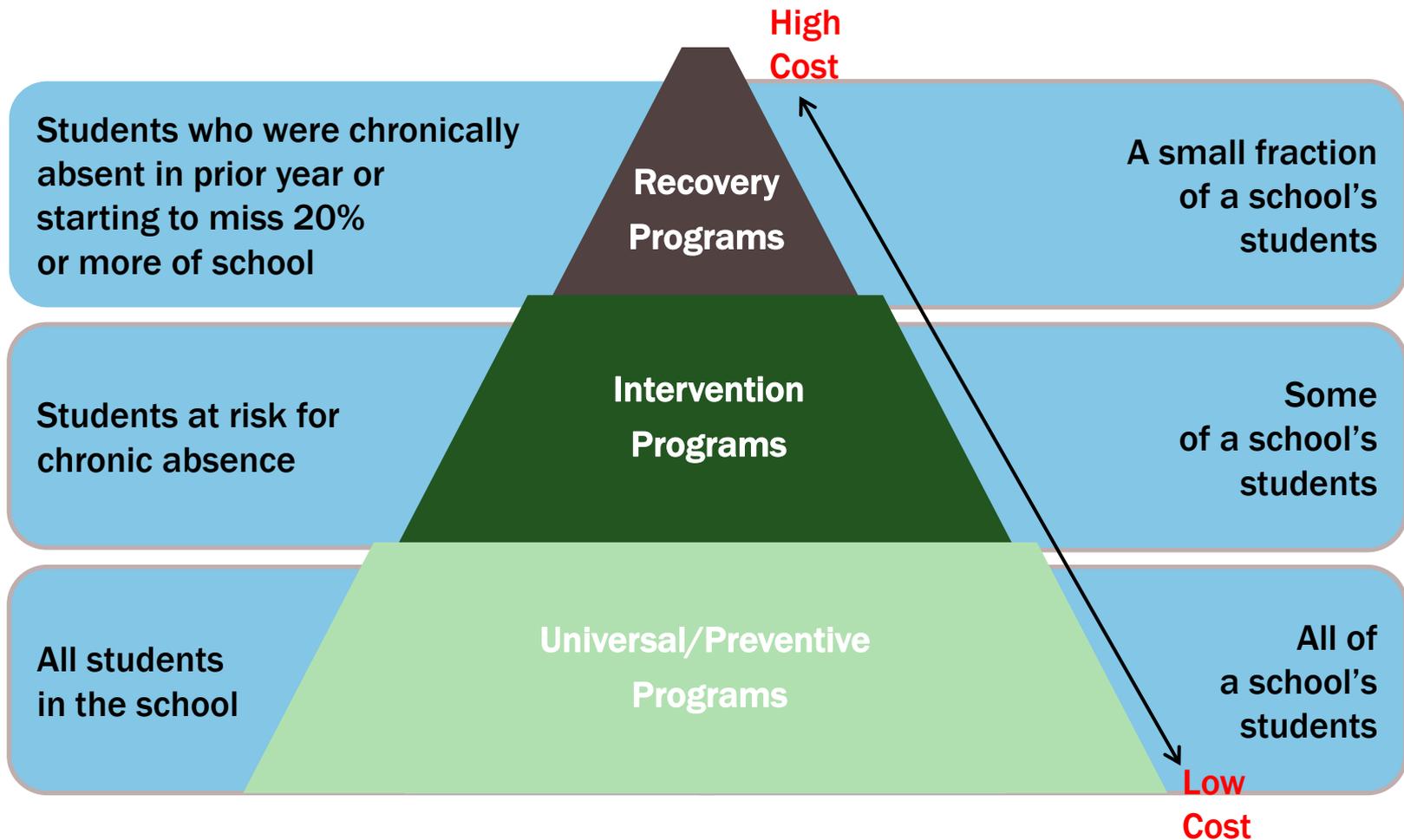
Develop Programmatic Responses to Barriers

Provide Personalized Early Outreach

Monitor Attendance Data and Practice



Increased Attendance Involves a 3-Tiered Approach that Fits with Most Reform Efforts



Variation Across Schools Helps Identify Good Practice and Need for Intervention

Chronic Absence Levels Among Oakland Public Schools (2009-10)

	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic Absence	0.3%	6.9%	7.9%
Median	12.7%	14.9%	21.0%
Mean	11.9%	15.6%	22.4%

Examples of Successful Efforts



Baltimore: Fewer unnecessary suspensions, reduced middle school transitions, expanded monitoring of attendance data, and a citywide campaign have **helped cut middle school chronic absence in half.** Baltimore is now turning its attention to preschool and elementary school.



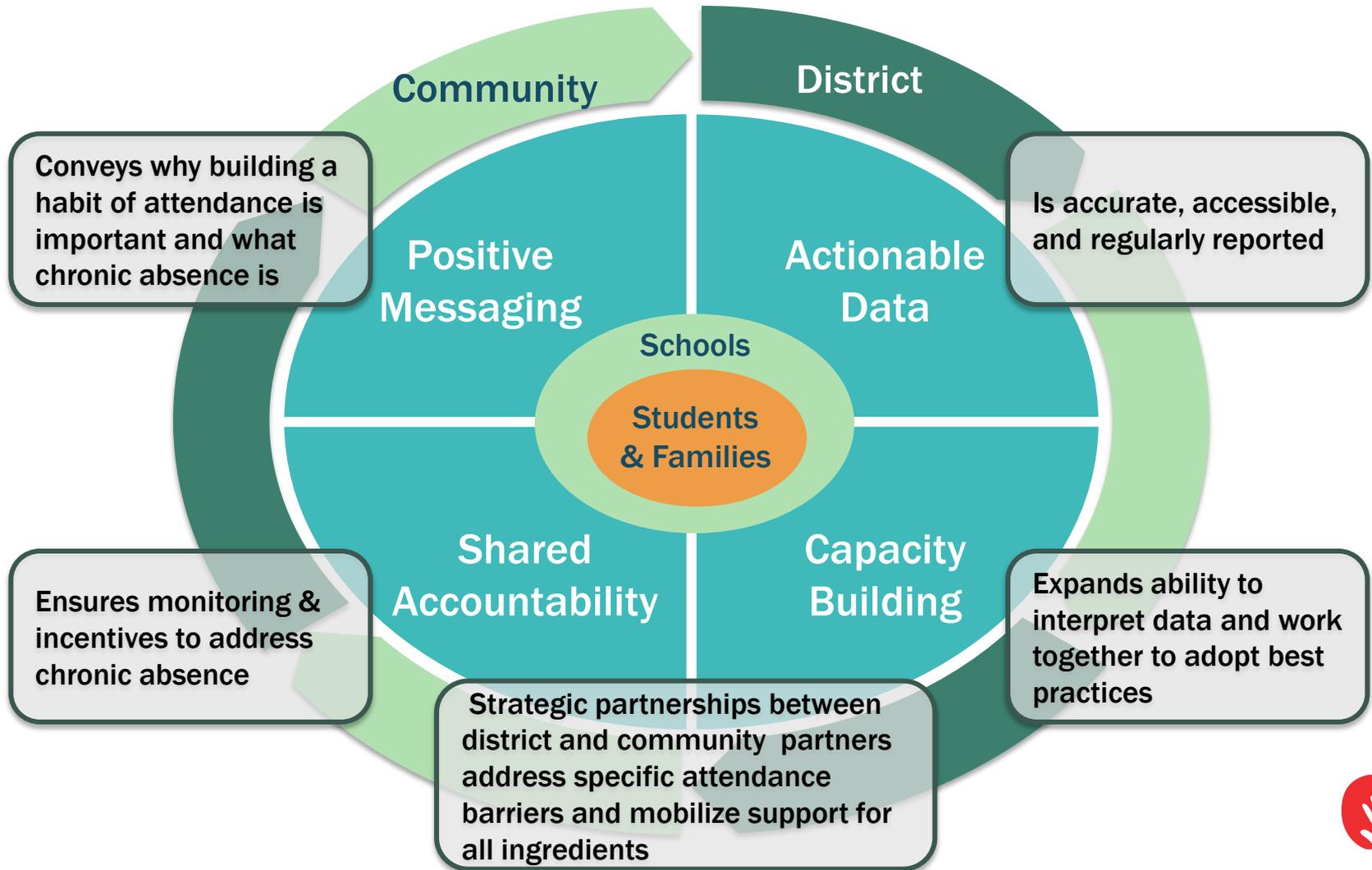
New York City: School-wide incentives, celebrity wake-up calls, data dashboards, and success mentors for at-risk students **have reduced chronic absence in pilot elementary, middle and high schools. Students with success mentors gained 11,800 additional days of school.**

For additional examples:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/>



Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



The Superintendents Call to Action

**Own the
Issue**

**Mobilize
the
Community**

**Drive With
Data**

*To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit:
www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action*



Use September to Launch Attendance Awareness Month in Your Community!!



<http://www.attendanceworks.org/attendancemonth/>



Attendance Works

Hedy Chang, Director

hedy@attendanceworks.org

Cecelia Leong, Associate Director

cecelia@attendanceworks.org

Phyllis Jordan, Communications Lead

phyllis@attendanceworks.org

Sue Fothergill, Senior Policy Fellow

sue@attendanceworks.org

Elise Dizon-Ross, Manager, Research & Development

elise@attendanceworks.org



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