

# Every Day Counts!

Attend Today, Succeed Tomorrow...



# Attendance Policy

and Procedures Manual to Promote Positive Attendance



OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools,  
Thriving Students

Oakland Unified School District  
Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Department  
Attendance and Discipline Support Services

# Quick Tips

## Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

- Students are considered chronically *absent* if they miss 10% or more days of school for any reason.
- Students are considered *truant* if they miss 3 days of school without a valid excuse and/or are late to class 3 times by 30 minutes or more without a valid excuse.

## Taking Attendance

- Take accurate daily attendance. Attendance is to be taken by *teachers only*. This reduces liability issues and prevents fines and penalties that can be assessed.
- In middle and high schools, there is no “15 minute tardy rule” that allows a teacher to mark a student as having an unverified absence after showing up late.

## Attendance Documentation

- The P code (Personal code) can be used for State-approved reasons only: court appearance, employment conference, religious holiday/ceremony or attendance at a religious retreat (4 hours per semester). Always document P code Usage in the Aeries Attendance Notes.
- *Fully document* all interactions with parents in Aeries. Each of us has a piece of the student's story, document it.
- Use the Aeries Attendance Notes to document parental contact regarding absences, 30 minute plus tardiness times and early dismissal/leave times and reasons.
- Use the Assertive Discipline Record for discipline-related issues to document: SART, SST, and COST team meeting outcomes and activities/interventions/strategies; and any contact made outside of daily absences calls.
- Multiple tardies or periods of tardiness *may not be combined* to create an unverified absence. No number of days of tardiness or periods of tardiness can equal or create an unverified absence.

## Interventions for Absences

- Students are not to be dropped after 3, 5, 7, 10, or more days of continuous absence. Students must undergo the SART and SARB processes and can only be dropped for specific reasons (i.e., verification received that the student transferred to another school/district) and/or after approval from the SARB office.
- Do not suspend a student for cutting and/or having unexcused absences. This is a violation of District Policy. Failure to uphold a SART Agreement is not grounds for suspension.
- Continue site attendance interventions prior to, during, and/or after SART meetings, and/or after a referral to SARB, and/or notice of a referral to the District Attorney for truancy. Do not stop intervening. Document these efforts.
- For elementary and middle school SARB referrals, a parental date of birth, California drivers license, or the parent's social security number must be included for referrals to the District Attorney.

Intervene...Document!.... Intervene...Document!

Oakland Unified School District  
Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Department  
Attendance and Discipline Support Services

# Promoting Positive Attendance

A Reference Guide for School Sites

Every Day Counts: Attend Today, Succeed Tomorrow!

Community Schools, Thriving Students



OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Community Schools,  
Thriving Students*

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# Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual to Promote Positive Attendance

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# 1. Attendance Matters







## A. The Importance of Attendance

Oakland Unified School District's (OUSD's) objective is for every student to attend school every day on time.

To meet this objective, we established the following goals :

- Reduce chronic absence to 5% of students at every school.
- Ensure that 85% of students attend school 95% of school days annually.
- Reach an average daily attendance (ADA) rate of 98% at every school.

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day. It's important that we all understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life. (Attendance Works)

Currently 13% of our students are chronically absent due to excused and unexcused absences. The impact on academics and graduation rates is well documented. The fiscal impact of low attendance can be devastating and impair the district's ability to provide needed programs and resources to our students.

OUSD is committed to reducing student absences regardless of the reason. Students who attend school today, will succeed tomorrow!

## B. Purpose, Background, and Education Laws

### Purpose

**Too many OUSD students are chronically absent. They miss 18 or more days of school each year. The school site's Attendance Plan is the first line of defense in our fight to reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy.**

OUSD wants schools to take accurate attendance, identify chronically absent students, and provide interventions designed to improve the attendance of these identified students.

This manual has been developed to assist school district personnel in understanding and putting into practice procedures consistent with Federal, State, and OUSD District attendance policies and procedures. The manual provides general information, procedural information, and forms that can be utilized by staff. The Attendance Manual should be used in accordance with State regulations and District policies and serves as a:

- Guide for implementing attendance policies
- Reference for answering questions
- Staff development tool
- Resource guide

### Background

Senate Bill (SB) 727 reimbursed public schools for actual in-seat student attendance. State law provides that students who attend school during any part of the school day will generate state revenue, so long as they are not marked absent for the entire school day. [cf. Title 5, Section 403, California Code of Regulations (CCR)]. The attendance for students attending continuation high schools is recorded by clock hour.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) is the total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of instructional days for the school year. A student attending every day earns one unit of ADA. Students who attend school any part of the school day are marked "in attendance" and will generate state revenue. Students must appear in their classroom(s) to be counted present. ADA is not the same as enrollment, which is the number of students enrolled at each school and district. The state uses a school district's ADA to determine apportionment revenue and other funding.

### California Education Laws

**Education Code Section 48200:** Students between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to attend school.

**Education Code Section 48260.5:** Habitually truant students may be subject to prosecution, fines, community service, and loss of driver's license. Parents of truant students are obliged to compel the attendance of the student at school. Parents are advised to meet with school officials, investigate alternative education programs in the district, and attend classes with the student for one day.

**Education Code Section 48263:** Habitually truant and habitually insubordinate students may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

**Education Code Section 48292 and Penal code Section 272:** Failure to attend school as required may result in the filing of a complaint against the parent with the District Attorney's Office.

## Forms Available on Website

Many of the forms and templates referenced in the Appendices are on the OUSD intranet.

1. Go to [www.OUSD.k12.ca.us](http://www.OUSD.k12.ca.us)
2. Click on OUSD Employee Intranet
3. Click on School Operations Library
4. Click on Attendance or Truancy

\*May be found on the OUSD Employee Intranet at [www.ousd.k12.ca.us](http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us)

**Other questions:** Contact Attendance and Discipline Support Services at 510-273-1530.

## 2. Chronic Absence Intervention





## A. Chronic Absence Intervention Protocol

### For Site-Based Attendance Teams

<b>Explanation</b>	Students with chronic absences require interventions to change behavior and maintain positive attendance patterns. In order for interventions to have an impact, it is important to follow consistent protocol that is responsive to each student's unique circumstances.	
	<b>Chronic Absence</b>	<b>Truancy</b>
<b>What is the difference between Chronic Absence and Truancy?</b>	Missing 10% of school days for any reason—excused and unexcused—in one school year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absent without a valid excuse for more than 3 full days in one school year (A or U code)</li> <li>Absent from class without a valid excuse on 3 or more occasions in one school year (M code)</li> <li>Any combination of the above</li> </ul>

### What are the Effective Interventions for Addressing Chronic Absence?

When a Student is Absent for...	School Staff Will...
Any day of instruction (excused or unexcused absences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a personal phone call to parent/guardian.</li> <li>Document reason for absence.</li> <li>Enter appropriate Absent Code in Aeries.</li> <li>Verify accuracy of all contact numbers and update student information in Aeries.</li> <li>Refer family to appropriate school-based resources or support agencies.</li> </ul>
3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See prior sections for foundational interventions.</li> <li>Encourage classroom teacher to call home to inquire about student's absence.</li> <li>Flag students on the first Notice of Truancy (NOT) letter log (unexcused absences only).</li> <li>Refer family to school-based resources and/or support agencies.</li> </ul>
6 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See prior sections for foundational interventions.</li> <li>Consult with school counselor (if available).</li> <li>Implement strategies outlined in site attendance support plan.</li> <li>Send second NOT letter (unexcused absences only).</li> <li>Hold a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) (see discussion of SART in the following section) meeting (unexcused absences only).</li> <li>Notify school nurse if absences are health related.</li> <li>Schedule parent conference.</li> </ul>
8 days	<b>Generate and mail Chronic Absence Letter</b> (excused/unexcused absences) if this occurs within a single semester.
10 days (excused or unexcused absences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See prior sections for foundational interventions.</li> <li>Review prior absence data to determine if a pattern exists.</li> <li>Monitor students.</li> <li>Refer student to case manager or other site support person.</li> <li>Conduct a home visit.</li> </ul>
14 days or more (excused or unexcused absences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See prior sections for foundational interventions.</li> <li>Hold a SART/Coordination of Services Team (COST)/Student Success Team (SST) meeting to discuss student's attendance.</li> <li>Refer student to School Attendance Review Board (SARB) after 17 or more unexcused absences and SART meeting(s).</li> </ul>

## What Systems Must Be in Place at My Site?

This protocol is dependent on three basic systems and expectations at your school site.

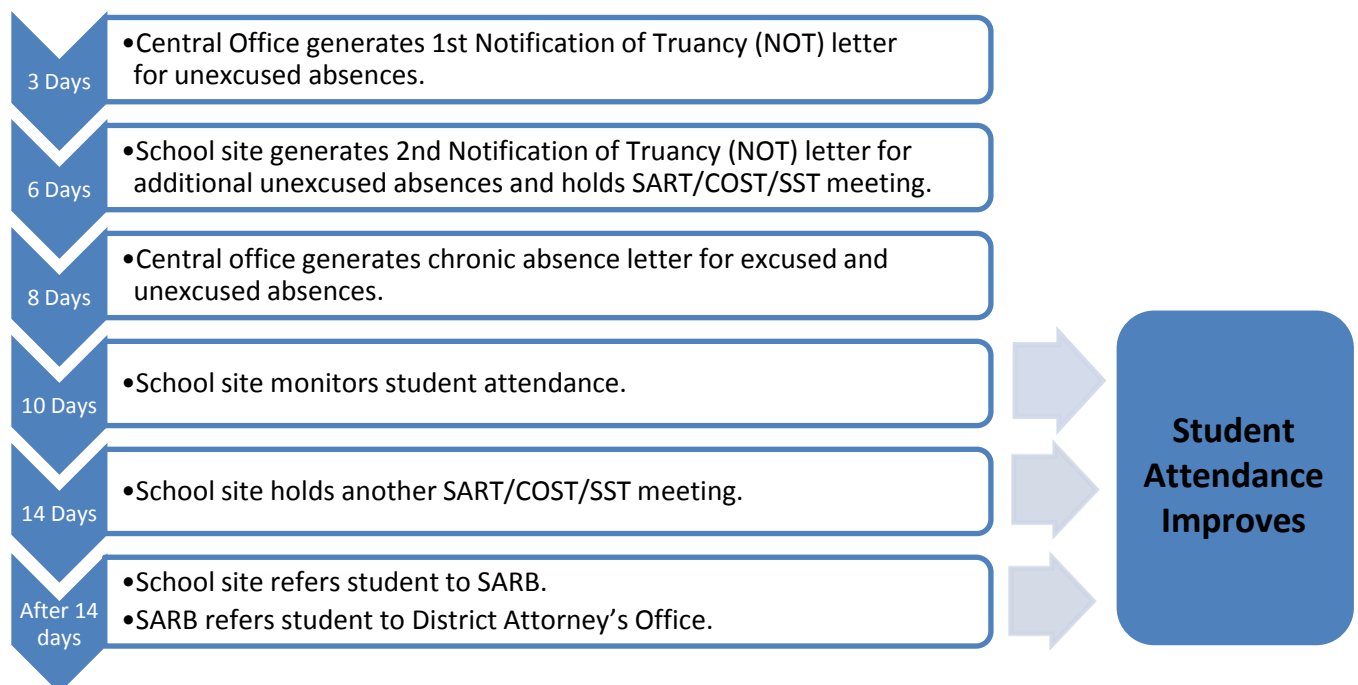
- Every teacher must take attendance for every student in every class period.
- Each step in this process must be documented and entered into Aeries.
- Each school must have a certificated staff member who oversees this protocol in addition to the clerical, student support, and other staff who implement it.

## How Long Before I Can Drop a Chronically Absent Student?

You may not drop a student for chronic absence. Regardless of the number of days absent (consecutively or otherwise), students may only be dropped after following the Chronic Absence Intervention protocol.

## B. Chronic Absence/Truancy Intervention Flowchart

As shown on the flow chart that follows, students referred to SART/SARB should still be supported by school site interventions. The steps listed in the flow chart can overlap.





## C. Independent Study

In some instances a student may have to miss school for 2 to 3 weeks because of a family emergency or health condition. In these cases, an administrator should meet with the parent to determine if Independent Study is an option.

If the administrator determines that Independent Study is an option, action must be taken to ensure the school completes the steps necessary to process the Independent Study contract. When contracts are properly completed, the school receives ADA funding for students on Independent Study. This process is described below.

### Placing a Student on Independent Study: A Checklist for Certificated Administrators

<b>Explanation</b>	<p>There are critical tasks that must be completed prior to assigning a student to Independent Study. This is a checklist for the certificated administrator responsible for placing a student on Independent Study, ensuring the student's work is reviewed by a teacher, and supervising accurate record-keeping to ensure all tasks are completed and ready for an audit.</p> <p>Additional forms, guidelines, and step-by-step instructions are available in the School Operations Library under Student Information and Attendance — Independent Study.</p>		
<b>Independent Study Assignment Checklist</b>	<b>Before Independent Study Assignment</b>		
	<b>Step</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Does What..</b>
	1	Certificated Administrator	Collects the complete <b>Independent Study Master Agreement</b> with signatures from the school administrator, parent, and student.
	2	Certificated Administrator	Reviews the agreement to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The length of the assignment is between 5 and 20 days</li> <li>• The start date does not immediately follow a suspension</li> <li>• The student is not currently on a Disciplinary Hearing Panel (DHP) placement</li> </ul>
	3	Teacher	Completes the <b>Independent Study Assignment Form</b> .
	4	Clerical Staff	Creates the student's <b>Independent Study Folder</b> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's completed Independent Study Master Agreement</li> <li>• Student's completed Independent Study Assignment Form</li> <li>• A copy of the Independent Study board policy (BP 6158)</li> <li>• Samples of the student's original work (after student returns and teacher has assigned credit)</li> </ul>
	5	Clerical Staff	Complete assignment entry in Aeries including start and end dates.
	<b>After Student Returns from Independent Study</b>		
	<b>Step</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Does What...</b>
	1	Certificated Administrator	Collects student work and distributes to teacher(s) for evaluation with the <b>Independent Study Assignment Form(s)</b> .
	2	Certificated Administrator	Collects the complete <b>Independent Study Assignment Form</b> from the teacher(s) and ensures that each form includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's comments and grades</li> <li>• Teacher's signature</li> <li>• Days of work attempted</li> <li>• Days of work completed</li> </ul>
	3	Clerical Staff	Files samples of student's original work in his/her <b>Independent Study Folder</b> .
	4	Clerical Staff	Changes the leave code in Aeries from <b>L – Left on IS</b> to <b>F – Fulfilled</b> .

## D. Attendance Teams

Attendance teams at school sites are responsible for observing individual students who are chronically absent. It is important to ensure that the individual needs of each student are being met using all available resources. The attendance team also monitors what is happening overall for all students and student sub-groups at a school site.

### An Effective Attendance Team

An attendance team includes:

- A designated chairperson or facilitator
- The school principal and school site personnel who understand and can analyze attendance data for individual students and the entire school

#### Attendance teams at school sites work on two levels.

1. **Individual student level:** attendance teams observe individual students who are chronically absent and ensure that their needs are being met using all available resources. At the individual student level, attendance teams:
  - Examine the list of students with attendance issues every week to ensure that each student receives appropriate supports.
  - Look at other student data (grades, test scores, behavioral referrals, health issues, etc.) to develop a full picture of what is happening in a student's life, especially for those students with more severe attendance problems.
  - Use data on attendance and chronic absence to determine the nature and intensity of needed supports. Supports can range from a call home or a truancy letter to a more intensive intervention and case management process offered through the COST team.
  - Review outcomes of prior interventions to determine if supports were effective or not.
2. **School level:** attendance teams monitor what is happening overall for all students and student sub-groups at a school site. At the school level, attendance teams:
  - Communicate the importance of attendance to the entire school staff and clearly spell out how each staff member can work with the attendance team and help students who are chronically absent.
  - Establish positive expectations for good attendance with students and their families. This includes creating a culture of attendance as well as defining what happens when a student misses school. This may include tiered interventions to provide needed support as well as consequences.
  - Examine trend information and seek out information about unusual attendance trends and patterns every quarter.
  - Compile data across individual students and multiple data sources to unpack common barriers to attendance and then forge partnerships to address those challenges. (see *Research: Attendance and Academic Success* in the Appendix.)
  - Assess the impact of efforts such as attendance incentives on reducing rates of chronic absence.

**Attendance teams should meet at least every other week to assess the effectiveness of the process, review attendance data, and modify the plan as needed.**

### Community Schools Strategic Site Plan, School Attendance Plans

The School Attendance Plan, part of the Community Schools Strategic Site Plan (CSSSP), is required to identify how the schools are going to promote positive attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. This is a critical component of the overall School Site Plan. In order to draft the plan, the attendance team must complete an attendance cycle of inquiry that allows the team to review attendance data and identify their attendance-related challenges.

The four core components of an effective School Attendance Plan are:

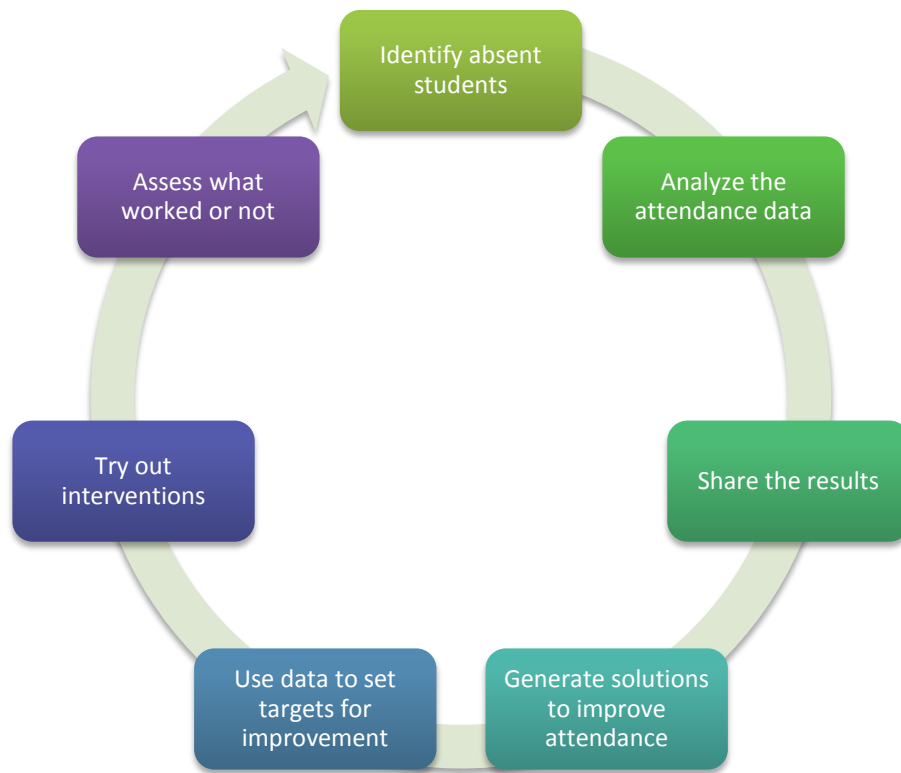
1. **Recognizing good and improved student attendance:** Students who have good or improved attendance should be recognized by their school. The School Attendance Plan should identify how that recognition will take place.
2. **Parent and student engagement:** Engaging parents and students about the importance of attendance and the benefits of good attendance must take place daily.
3. **Early outreach:** Processes need to be in place from the beginning of the year and throughout the year to identify students at risk for chronic absences and how they will be supported.
4. **Site Attendance Team in Place:** The Attendance Team develops the attendance plan and oversees the implementation of the plan.

The School Attendance Plan should provide student support at three different tiers:

1. **Universal/Preventive Programs:** programs and strategies designed for the entire school
2. **Intervention Programs:** targeted to those students identified as at-risk for chronic absence
3. **Recovery Programs:** designed to support students who continue to have attendance challenges despite implemented interventions

## E. OUSD Attendance Cycle of Inquiry

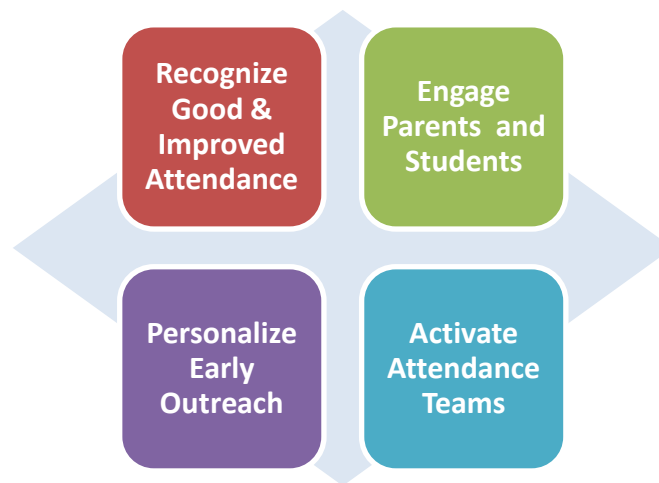
The OUSD Attendance Team works to ensure attendance is maintained by performing a cycle of activities that analyzes student absences, looks for solutions to correct, sets targets for improvement, seeks working interventions, and finally assesses solutions.



Source: Attendance Works

## F. Core Components of a School Attendance Plan

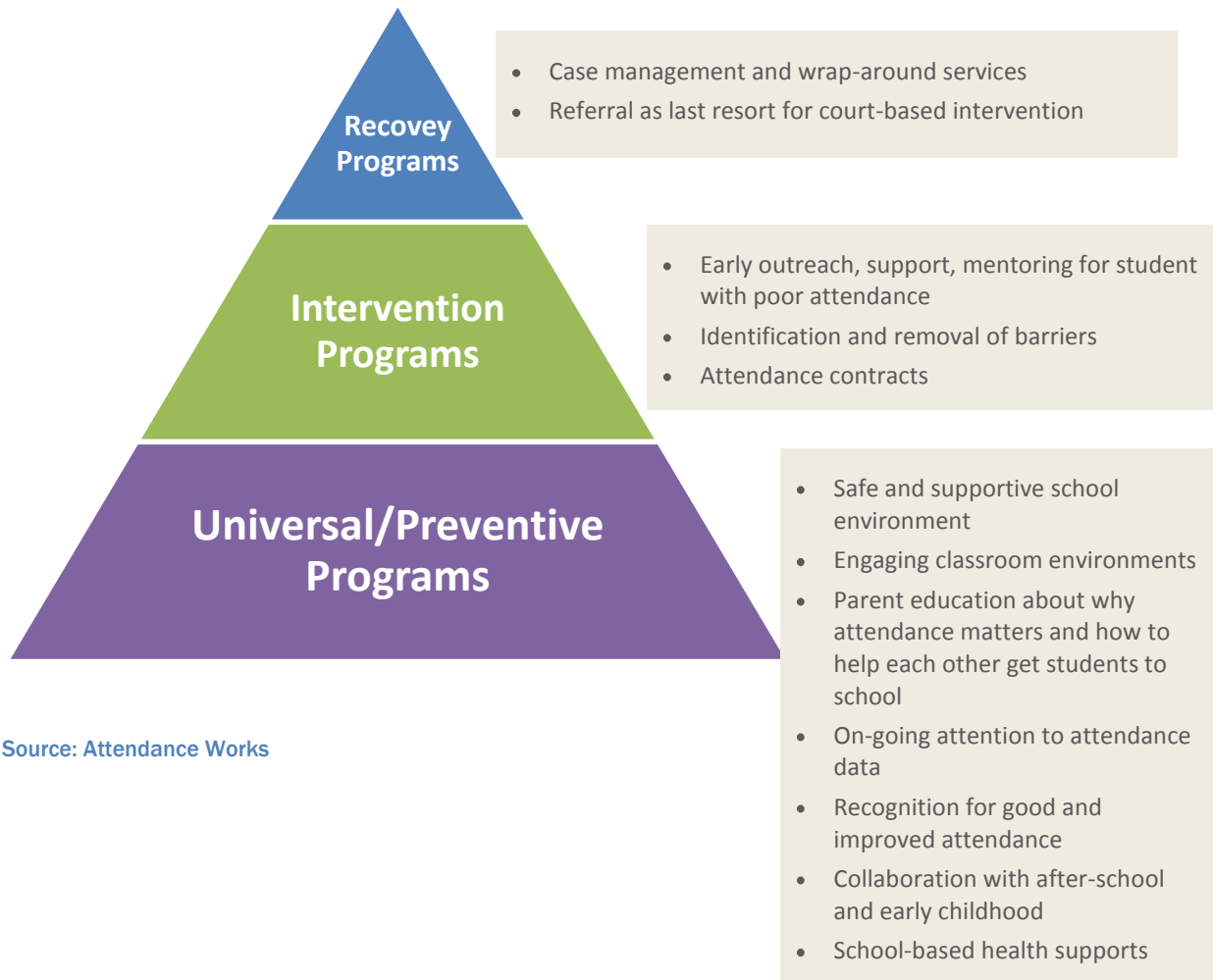
The core components of a successful School Attendance Plan are critical to ensure success.



Source: [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

## G. Levels of Student Support

It is our goal to provide a continuum of support to ensure high attendance levels. This support can be shown on a Framework that addresses three levels: Universal/Preventive that targets the whole student population; the level of early intervention that identifies students that need some support to maintain attendance; and the more intensive interventions for a small percentage of the student population. A strong base means fewer issues on the upper tiers.



Source: Attendance Works

## H. Chronic Absence Intervention Resources

When it is necessary to intervene in the case of chronic absence, the following resources are provided:

1. **Chronic Absence Letters** (Elementary and Secondary) - to be sent to parents/guardians in the case of chronically absent children.
2. **Parent Flyers** - to help parents/guardians understand the importance of good attendance and what they can do to encourage it.
3. **School Site Attendance Incentives** - ideas to help promote positive attendance.
4. **Sample School Attendance Plan** - an example of a plan to interrupt chronic absence.
5. **Individualized Student Attendance Plan** - a plan that is individually designed for a student at risk.

**1a) Chronic Absence Letter (Elementary) SAMPLE****Oakland Unified School District**

Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Department

Attendance and Discipline Support Services (ADSS)-Elementary Chronic Absence Letter (Generated Centrally)

746 Grand Avenue

Oakland, CA 94610

Telephone: 510-273-1530

Fax: 510-273-1531

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our goal this year is for every student to attend school regularly.

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understanding why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

Our records indicate that your child, \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent from school for \_\_\_\_\_ days this school year. This puts your child on track for being chronically absent. A student is considered chronically absent if he or she has missed 10 percent or more of the days he or she has been enrolled in school.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school — regardless of the reason — it can cause them to fall behind academically. Research shows that:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

**Clearly going to school regularly matters!**

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. Here are a few suggestions to help support your child's attendance.

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, counselors, and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.
- If other issues are impacting your child's attendance, *please talk to someone at your child's school.*

Let us know how we can best support you and your child in order to improve his or her attendance. We want your child to be successful in school! If you have any questions or need more information, please call your child's school.

Sincerely,

Principal

## 1b) Chronic Absence Letter (Secondary) SAMPLE

### **Oakland Unified School District**

Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Department

Attendance and Discipline Support Services (ADSS)-Elementary Chronic Absence Letter (Generated Centrally)

746 Grand Avenue

Oakland, CA 94610

Telephone: 510-273-1530

Fax: 510-273-1531

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our goal this year is for every student to attend school regularly.

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understanding why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

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- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

### **Clearly going to school regularly matters!**

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. Here are a few practices to help support regular attendance. Encourage your child to:

- Keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Go to school unless they are truly sick.
- Talk to you, teachers, counselors for advice on how to make them feel comfortable if they are anxious about going to school.
- Work with you to develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

Let us know how we can best support you and your child in order to improve his or her attendance. We want your child to be successful in school! If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,

Principal





# Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

## DID YOU KNOW?

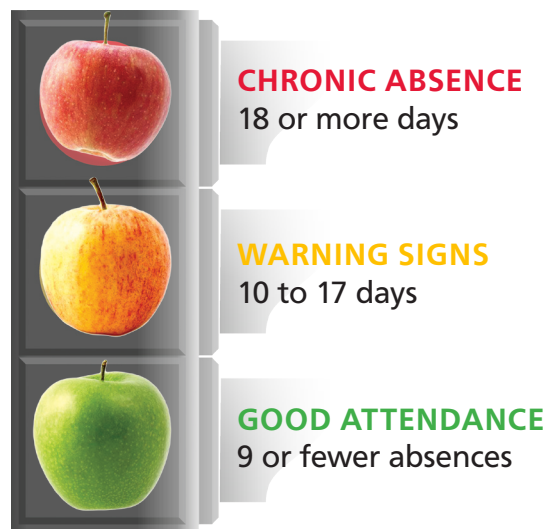
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

**Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

## When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org) and [reachoutandread.org](http://reachoutandread.org)



# every day counts

ATTEND TODAY -  
ACHIEVE TOMORROW!

## Good attendance is important because:

- Children and teenagers learn to read and write proficiently
- Each grade provides the building blocks to understand math in the next grade
- Children and teenagers learn how to be good students
- Students learn how to interact with others and have fun when they are in school
- Students acquire the skills needed to be successful in college and beyond.

## Questions about your child's attendance will be answered:

### Speak to your child's teacher if:

- a) You think your child has been mistakenly marked absent or late
- b) Your child doesn't want to go to school because he or she is struggling socially or academically
- c) You have a family emergency that causes your child to miss school and you would like to know how to make up the work

### Speak to the front office staff if:

- a) You need to clear an absence or report an absence
- a) Your child must be absent for a medical appointment or is too sick to be in school. Remember to always bring a copy of the doctor's note to the school

### Speak to your Principal if:

You want to find out if your child is at risk due to poor attendance

## If your family is struggling, OUSD can help!

- a) Health issues: Call the nurse at your child's school or Health Services at 510- 879-8816
- b) No Place to Live: Call Transitional Students and Families at 510-434-7776
- c) Lack of Transportation: Call the Student Assignment Office at 510-434-7752, Extension 224

For more information, visit our website at: [atschool.alcoda.org](http://atschool.alcoda.org)





# Help Your Child Succeed in School:

**Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**  
**School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!**

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children and teenagers feel better about school – and themselves. Start building this habit in now so they can learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless your child is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

## When Do Absences Become a Problem?



### CHRONIC ABSENCE

18 or more days



### WARNING SIGNS

10 to 17 days



### GOOD ATTENDANCE

9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit  
[atschool.alcoda.org](https://atschool.alcoda.org)

# Help Your School and Community Improve School Attendance:

## PUSH FOR BETTER TRACKING OF CHRONIC ABSENCE DATA

Every report card includes a box showing parents just how many absences their children have. But does your school look at absenteeism numbers for the whole student body? And can the principal tell you how many students are missing so much school that it interferes with their academic performance? Keep in mind, too much absenteeism isn't just a problem for the students missing school but can disrupt learning for the whole classroom.

All parents should know this sort of information about their children's school. But many schools and districts don't track or release what's known as chronic absence data – the percent of students missing 10% or 18 days over an entire school year. They look at the average number of students who show up for school, rather than at the number who are missing too much school due to any kind of absence, excused or unexcused. Average figures can mask large numbers of chronically absent, at-risk students.

***Parents can make a difference!***

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### In Your Community

- **Get the data:** Ask your school and district to calculate chronic absence rates and share them with parents, teachers and principals.
- **Identify barriers to attendance:** Work with your school to find out from parents and students what prevents them from getting to school.
- **Make a plan:** Encourage your school to make a plan and partner with community agencies to address identified attendance barriers.
- **Create incentives:** Help your school recognize students and families for good and improved attendance. Assist with award ceremonies and certificates or even reach out to local businesses to contribute incentives like gift cards or food items.
- **Educate parents:** Help all parents in your school understand the importance of attendance and who to call for the health, transportation or social services resources they need.



### In Your State

- **Encourage tracking:** State regulations or laws should ensure that more school districts track chronic absence data and report it to the state.
- **Urge better reporting:** Your state education department should release chronic absence data statewide, just like they release test scores for districts and schools.
- **Advocate for accountability:** Your state department of education and districts should hold schools accountable for addressing chronic absence in their school improvement plans.

**Families  
In Schools**   
Building Partnerships for Student Success



### **3) School Site Attendance Incentives**

The first line of defense in combating chronic absence is the implementation of a well designed School Attendance Plan that includes attendance incentives. Recognizing good and improved attendance is key to changing the culture of accepted absences school-wide. The next few pages outline some suggested ideas for school incentives designed to help promote positive attendance.





# Establishing School-wide Attendance Incentives

School attendance is a simple, easily understood measure of student performance. One strategy for improving attendance is engaging students, parents, educators and community members in a campaign that offers positive rewards for getting to school on-time.

## What to Remember:

- Attendance incentives are most effective when part of a comprehensive approach that includes outreach to families with more significant challenges to attendance. Incentives should be part of creating a school-wide culture of attendance and accompanied by a deep commitment to ensuring students are engaged in the classroom once they show up.
- Incentives don't need to be costly. Simple rewards—recognition from peers and the school through certificates or assemblies, extra recess time, homework passes or even dancing in the hallways—go a long way toward motivating students. Ask students what they consider a meaningful incentive.
- Interclass competition is a powerful motivator. The sense of competition between classes (with rewards like a party for the class with the best monthly attendance) can be a powerful motivator. Such strategies encourage students to feel accountable to each other for attending class.
- Avoid recognizing only perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is not always the goal since it is not wise to encourage children to come to school when they're sick. Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect records. Offering weekly perfect attendance awards can allow students to still have a chance to succeed the next week if they are absent.
- Reward timeliness not just showing up to school. Since tardiness also has an adverse impact on learning, many schools only count on-time attendance toward rewards.
- Send home information highlighting both the value of attendance and incentives and the consequences of poor attendance. Ensure families know about the incentive program and the importance of attendance for academic success, as well as school policies in which poor attendance can result in failing a course or being retained. Sanctions should never be used without incentives.
- Offer incentives for families, not just students. Often, families appreciate access to resources such as food baskets, transportation passes, etc.
- Implement incentives school wide. To fostering a culture of attendance, every classroom needs to participate!!

## Ideas for Incentives

### Teachers can offer:

- Positive comments to children
- Positive notes home to parents
- Extra time at the computer or PE
- Free homework pass
- First-in-line privileges for lunch or dismissal
- Pencils, pens, stickers, posters, book covers, book marks, etc.
- Team certificates for the best record or most improved record
- Name on the “Attendance Wall” in the classroom
- Chance to act as teacher’s assistant

### Administration, PTAs and Boosters can provide:

- Recognition during morning announcements
- Certificate/award at student assembly
- Breakfast/lunch with the principal, superintendent, school board president, mayor, etc.
- School supplies, i.e. pencil with logo
- Food coupons redeemable in school cafeteria
- Smoothie/pizza party for class with best attendance
- “School money” for the school store
- Choice of donated product (movie, tickets, gift certificate)
- Traveling trophy for grade-level homeroom with best monthly attendance
- Attendance T-shirts/hats/buttons
- Age-appropriate rewards for most improved attendance
- Parking space near building for student with most improved attendance

**Good attendance helps kids succeed in school and bolster their self-esteem. Improving attendance requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond sanctions and includes incentives.**

### Here are some steps schools are taking:

When students at Michigan elementary school achieve perfect attendance for a month, they become a STAR (Studious, Thoughtful Accountable and Respectful) student. They earn a gold T-shirt saying “I am a STAR student.” Their picture is displayed on the television in the school lobby.

A California elementary school improved its on-time attendance with an interclass competition that promised a pizza party to the first class with enough days of perfect attendance to spell out the words “Perfect Punctuality.”

Another California elementary school awards the class with the best attendance an extra 15 minute recess on Fridays supervised by the principals. The students enjoy the attention from their principal and the teacher gets an extra-long lunch break.

An Oklahoma elementary school issues “school dollars” to students with good and improved attendance. Students can use the dollars at the school store to buy Christmas presents for family.

A Georgia middle school recognizes good attendance on a weekly, monthly and semester basis. Students who attend for a full week receive popcorn passes. The homeroom class in each grade level with the best attendance each month receives milk and doughnuts. Students with fewer than two absences can enter end-of-semester drawings for prizes.

A Georgia high school comes down hard on students who skip school: Seven unexcused absences a semester can mean course failure. But the high school also offers incentives: Those with fewer than two excused absences can receive 10 extra points on final exams.



*Attendance Works is a national and state initiative working to improve the policy and practice around attendance. For more information go to [www.attendancework.org](http://www.attendancework.org).*

4) Sample School Attendance Plan

School Quality Indicator 2: Safe, Healthy, and Supportive Learning Environments

Strategic Priority C: Interrupting Chronic Absence (Attendance)

School Quality Standards relevant to this Strategic Priority

A quality school...

Offers a coordinated and integrated system of academic and learning support services provided by adults and youth.

Identifies at-risk students and intervenes early to help students and their parents develop concrete plans for the future.

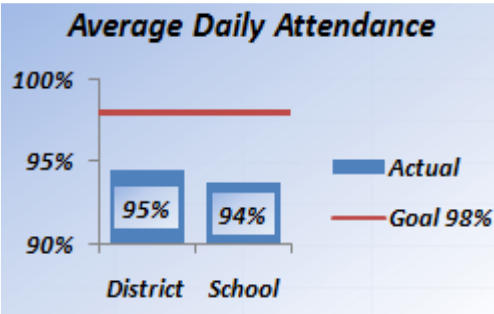
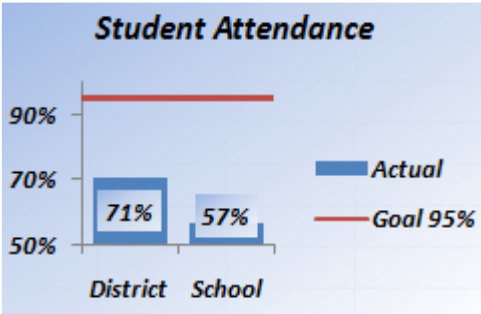
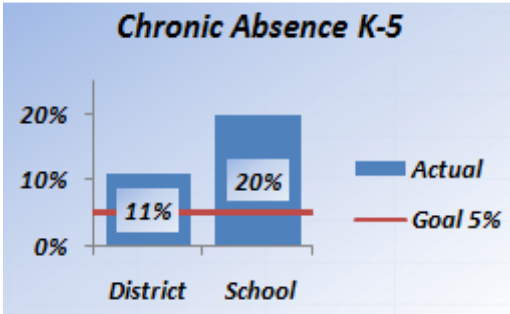
From OUSD Strategic Plan:

Full Service Community Schools support attendance improvements as part of transforming educational outcomes for students. Chronic absence, defined as missing 10% or more school days for any reason, is a key indicator and area of focus in Full Service Community Schools. Chronic absence, which impacts one in seven Oakland students, is correlated with lowered reading outcomes and graduation rates. If our system begins addressing chronic absence at the Pre-K and K levels, we would see marked differences in student learning by 3rd grade.

District-Level Goals

- Reduce Chronic Absence (students missing 10% or more of the school year) to 5% or less.
- Increase Satisfactory Attendance (percentage of students attending 95% or more of school days) to 85%.
- Interrupt patterns of chronic absences and suspensions to reach a 98% average daily attendance (ADA) rate.

District- and School-level Data



- Insert your own data here
- Quarterly attendance recognition events honored 4<sup>th</sup> graders 3 out of 4 quarters

<b>School-level Data Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High chronic absence, low satisfactory attendance</li><li>• Latino and English Learners (EL), which are the largest subgroups, have best attendance, but are still below district average. Others have high chronic/low satisfactory attendance, especially African Americans, the third largest subgroup.</li><li>• Chronic absence is highest in K-1 across all classrooms</li><li>• Chronic absence is lowest in grades 4-5, only 5% at grade 4</li></ul>	<b>Description of School Theory of Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on outreach and education of K-1 parents where chronic absence rates are high in order to set a pattern for the rest of students' elementary years</li><li>• Recognize attendance like we recognize academic achievement</li><li>• Engage families and community partners</li><li>• Promote parent-to-parent engagement and support regarding attendance (more effective coming from other parents)</li></ul>
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Strategies	Indicators	Student Group	Timeline	Owner	Date Last Modified	Item #	Strategic Action	Budget Res.	Res. #	Obj. Code	Obj. Code Name	Position Code	FTE	Budget Amt.
Reach out to parents of students with chronic absence with a focus on K-1 students. Reach out through site attendance team, home visits and calls home, and reflect on challenges.	Daily attendance meets attendance goals, including in targeted areas (K-1 focus). Students with chronic absence attend school more frequently after our efforts to reach out.	Students with chronic absence (K-1 focus)	Quarterly	Principal, Attendance Team led by Attendance Clerk, and Teachers	12/5/11	SQI2C1	Teacher home visits for truant students – focus on K-1 students	EIA-SCE	7090	1120	Teacher Ex. Pay	N/A	N/A	\$1,500
					12/6/11	SQI2C2	Hire part-time Att. Clerk	Title I	3010	2205	Att. Clerk	UPC	.20	\$15K
					12/5/11	SQI2C3	Form Site Attendance Team that convenes bi-weekly: Principal, Att. Clerk, Parent Liaison	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
					12/5/11	SQI2C4	Teachers make 3-4 calls home per week	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
					12/5/11	SQI2C5	Community mentors provide weekly 1:1 mentoring for 6 African American Male students	Funded by Community Partner	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Engage parents and community in supporting improving student attendance (K-1 focus) through parent events.	Daily attendance improves after parent education events.	TBD	Monthly	Att. Team led by Att. Clerk	12/6/11	SQI2C6	Parent meeting - Parent Snacks	Title I	3010	4311	Refreshments	N/A	N/A	\$700
					12/6/11	SQI2C7	Parent meeting - Materials/Supplies	Title I	3010	4310	Materials/Supplies	N/A	N/A	\$800
					12/6/11	SQI2C8	Parent meeting - Materials/Supplies	EIA-SCE	7090	4310	Materials/Supplies	N/A	N/A	\$500

**5) Individualized Student Attendance Plan****Oakland Unified School District  
Individualized Student Attendance Plan**

Student Name	School Year
School	Long-term Goal
Targets for now: 1. 2. 3.	

How will we know? (Describe indicators of achievement and ways of implementing them, stated clearly and simply, e.g., 'We'll keep a record of your attendance on a chart.')

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Partners: (Who will help?)

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Strategies/timeframes: (What will the student do and by when?)

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What will the teacher/school staff/others do and by when?

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What will the parents/caregivers do and by when?

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Who else and by when?

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When will we talk about what's happening? (Describe who will meet with the student and when, e.g., "The counselor will meet with you for 5 minutes at 2 pm every day." or "The Afterschool Coordinator will check in with you every Friday afternoon in her office.")

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## **Oakland Unified School District Individualized Student Attendance Plan (Continued)**

How will we celebrate? (Describe short-term and long-term incentives. These should be done in consultation with the student and be what he/she agrees to, e.g., "When you reach your goal each week, you have an hour on the computer." or "When you achieve your attendance goal, you will receive a School Attendance Award." These rewards are usually part of the school's Attendance Plan.)

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Review: (Set a time to review progress and state who will do this.)

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What is the next goal?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Adapted from What Works. The Works Program



### 3. Student Attendance Review Team





## A. Purpose

The Student Attendance Review Team (SART) is a school site team that works to improve the attendance of identified students and interrupt patterns of chronic absences and suspensions. The SART accepts referrals for screening and resolution of individual students' irregular patterns of attendance and seeks to actively involve parents/guardians in resolving their child's attendance problems.

The SART brings a strengths-based approach, and provides a setting where all participants work together to identify strategies that will improve the student's attendance, addressing the needs of the whole child and the individual root causes of attendance issues.

## B. SART Meeting Process

A basic overview of the SART process is summarized in the following SART Process Flow Chart.



## How to Schedule and Convene SART Meetings

1. The SART chairperson distributes a memorandum to all staff notifying them of students scheduled for a SART meeting or SART review no later than 5 days before the meeting/review, so that teachers/staff can be in attendance or give input to the SART chair.
2. Notification of the SART meeting is sent to the parent/guardian via the second NOT letter, and a SART member or clerical/office staff makes a reminder call to the parent/guardian prior to the scheduled SART meetings and reviews.
3. SART meetings are held at least every other week or as frequently as needed to accommodate the number of referrals.

## Participants

**The SART meeting participants should include the student, the parents/guardians, staff and community members who know the student. If possible, professional staff and community members who can provide needed support services to the student and/or the family should also be invited to attend the SART meeting.**

Depending on the anticipated needs of the student and parents/guardians, at least three of the following people should be in attendance at the SART meeting:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s)
- SART chairperson
- Teacher(s)
- Counselor
- Onsite service provider(s)
- Psychologist
- Resource specialist
- Attendance clerk
- School nurse
- Administrator
- Outreach consultant

Your SART team may be the same as your SST/COST team. The school site decides which group conducts the work of the Attendance Team.

## Materials

The following materials should be prepared prior to the meeting and utilized to support the meeting process:

- Pre-typed contracts
- Map of SART/SARB process
- Breakdown of excused vs. unexcused absences from the student's record
- Progress Report Contracts
- Newspaper articles on truancy and consequences for parents
- Absence Verification Forms
- Graduation requirements
- List of student's physical/mental/emotional issues and/or academic challenges
- List of school and community resources
- Referral to resources: these should be established relationships between school site and agency and should include name of agency, who to contact, contact number, and comments. When counseling is recommended, an attempt should be made to provide counseling on site or very close to where the family lives. If services are recommended, it is necessary not to obligate the school/district to subsidize.

## What should I expect at a SART meeting?

The SART meeting brings a strengths-based approach similar to Student Success Team (SST) or case management models, where all participants work together to identify strategies that will improve the student's attendance, addressing the needs of the whole child and the root causes of the attendance issues.

If appropriate, the SART chair will invite qualified individuals who can offer helpful input in areas where the student and/or parents/guardians are struggling.

- If there are health issues in the home, invite the school nurse.
- If the student is homeless or transient, refer family to the McKinney Vento Liaison. (Transitional Students & Families)
- If student is a foster youth or refugee, connect with the Transitional Students and Family Unit at 510-273-1663.

During the meeting, **the SART Agreement is completed and signed by all participants**. A copy of the agreement is given to the family.

Before concluding the meeting, review the agreements and make sure all questions have been answered. Thank everyone for their participation. Add a couple of sentences describing the conclusion of the meeting, including the agreement with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

## Record Keeping

A clerical SART team member updates all student information in Aeries and the site's Excel database as needed.

The SART chairperson sends out a notice to all staff notifying them of students on SART Agreements with their review dates. The SART meeting log is entered into Aeries for teachers, administrators, and support staff to access. Additionally, every school must place a log in the student's cumulative file; and all contracts with the parents must be fully documented for future reference.

**Aeries:** All SART information is entered into the Discipline Screen.

Create a binder filing system as follows:

- Binder #1: Database Log in front. First NOT letters, second NOT letters, and SART Agreements in chronological order. Also include blank second NOT letters and blank contracts.
- Binder #2: Copies of SARB referrals, blank SARB paperwork, and documentation of all interaction/communication with SARB.

A site administrator should provide monitoring and supervision of the SART process.

## SART Review

The SART review allows the SART chair/team to:

- Check attendance and ensure that the family has accessed recommended services.
- Set the review date at the initial SART meeting.
- Conduct regular monthly reviews (after the first review) of all students who have been placed on a SART Agreement until remainder of the academic year.

## SARB Referral

A SARB referral only occurs after the school has made at least three meaningful and documented attempts at intervention. Interventions include: SART/COST/SST meetings; daily phone calls; meetings/conferences with the parent/guardian; a home visit.

In cases where a parent/guardian does not show up to the SART meeting, did not communicate with the school site to reschedule, and a second intervention was initiated but failed, the SARB referral can still be made. However, if communication has not been made due to disconnected phone lines, inaccurate mailing address, etc., *do not send case to SARB* without conducting a home visit.

Complete the SARB referral form located on the OUSD intranet. SARB referrals should be brought to the Attendance and Discipline Support Services Office.

## C. Strategies for Promoting Positive Attendance

Schools and communities are working together to promote regular attendance and reduce chronic absence.

### Teachers can:

- Ensure they take attendance accurately so students and families know someone cares when they miss school.
- Ensure all classrooms are welcoming, nurturing, and engaging so that students want to come to school every day. Greet each student by name as they enter the classroom.

### Schools can:

- Invest adequate staff time in accurate collection and entry of attendance data into Aeries.
- Analyze chronic absence and good attendance to discern patterns of students.
- Partner with families and community groups to develop and address attendance challenges affecting individual students and large numbers of students (e.g., unreliable transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable and unaffordable housing).
- Educate parents and children about the importance of attendance starting in the early years; reinforce messages through middle school and high school.
- Develop and implement a school-wide system of incentives and rewards for good attendance, such as holding assemblies and awarding certificates.
- Reach out in a supportive manner to frequently absent students to find out why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly.
- Invest in professional development to help teachers, staff, and administrators understand chronic absence.
- Consider how to engage your community partners and brainstorm how to promote positive attendance.

Source: [Attendance Works](#)

## D. SART Resources

1. **Notice of Truancy Letter 1 (NOT 1).** A NOT 1 letter is sent to parents/guardians centrally by the school district.
2. **Notice of Truancy Letter 2 (NOT 2).** A NOT 2 letter is sent to parents/guardians by the student's school.
3. **Student Attendance Review Team (SART) Agreement.** After students and parents/guardians receive a NOT 2 letter, a SART meeting is facilitated; this results in a SART Agreement, a contract with the student to meet actions that support his/her attendance.
4. **School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Referral.** If the SART Agreement is broken, the student is referred to the district's Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) for follow-up and support.



(District Letterhead)

**1) Notice of Truancy 1 (NOT 1) SAMPLE**

Student Name	Student ID#
Student Address	School
Parent/Guardian Name	Date

**Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver,**

Our school records indicate that your child, \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_ has been tardy to class more than 30 minutes or absent without a valid excuse three (3) times this school year.

According to *Education Code Section 48260.5*: Any pupil subject to full-time education who is tardy more than 30 minutes or absent from school without valid excuse three days in one school year is truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor of the superintendent of the school district.

*Education Code Section 48260.5* states the following.

- (I) Upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent/guardian, by first-class mail or other means, of the following:
  - (a) That the Pupil is truant.
  - (b) That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
  - (c) That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.
- (II) The District also shall inform parents/guardians of the following:
  - (a) That alternative educational programs are available in the district.
  - (b) That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
  - (c) That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under *Education Code Section 48264*.
  - (d) That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
  - (e) That it is recommended the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

We are dedicated to the academic achievement of your child. Any tardy more than 30 minutes or absence, whether they are excused or unexcused, affects your child's education and interferes with the learning for all students. Discuss this with your child. **Failure to improve attendance will result in a conference at your child's school.**

We also realize that you and /or your child and family may be experiencing some difficulties that are preventing attendance. If this is the case, please contact your school site for a referral option.

In closing, please remember: **Our goal is to educate your child. Help us partner with you.** If you feel you have received this letter in error, please contact your child's school and clear the absences with the attendance clerk.

Sincerely,

Theresa Clincy, Coordinator  
 Attendance and Discipline Support Services  
 Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Department  
 cc: Student File, SART Chair

(School Letterhead)

**2) Notice of Truancy 2 (NOT 2) SAMPLE**

Student Name	Student ID#
Student Address	School
Parent/Guardian Name	Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This **Second Letter** is to inform you that your child has an attendance problem.

Number of excused absences \_\_\_\_\_

Number of unexcused absences \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tardies (31+ minutes) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_**Referral for Unexcused Absences or Tardies**

- The School Attendance Review Team (SART) has received a referral on behalf of your child regarding excessive absences, tardies, or unexcused absences.
- An appointment has been made for you and your child to meet with the SART to consider a proper plan for correcting this problem.
- Both parents/guardians are requested to attend. Please bring your child.

**Your Appointment to Appear**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

**Failure to appear will result in a referral for further action.**

According to *Education Code Section 47621: Subsequent Report of Truancy*: Any pupil who has been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without a valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be reported as a truant to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the district.

We appreciate your cooperation in being prompt for your appointment.

Sincerely,

Principal or Designee: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosure: Copy of attendance record

Cc: Cumulative File, SARF Facilitator

[District Letterhead]

### 3) Student Attendance Review Team (SART) Agreement SAMPLE

Student Name	Student Birth Date	Student Grade
Student Address	School	
Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Phone Number(s)	

It is with complete understanding that I sign this, knowing that further violations of school rules and regulations can result in a referral to the **Student Attendance Review Board** and/or the **Alameda County District Attorney**.

**I also understand that if my child's absences exceed 15 days, future absences can only be excused by presenting a doctor's note. Absences without a doctor's note will be considered unexcused absences even if I send my child to school with a note.**

#### Student – I will:

- ☐ Attend all classes on time.
- ☐ Follow all school rules every day.
- ☐ Meet regularly with teachers, administrators, teachers, counselors, and/or tutors as directed.
- ☐ Take teacher-signed attendance card/progress report home for parent/guardian signature and return it to school.
- ☐ Complete all class assignments and homework.
- ☐ Attend the homework help classes at the school site and/or after-school programs.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Parent/Guardian – I will:

- ☐ Cooperate with school/district officials when I am contacted about my child's attendance or behavior.
- ☐ Ensure that my child attends school every day.
- ☐ Notify school when my child is absent and provide a doctor's note to excuse absences if required.
- ☐ Attend school with my (son/daughter) as directed, if absences continue (*Education Code Sections 48900.1 and 48910*).
- ☐ Attend parent conferences when requested.
- ☐ Excuse my child only for valid reasons.
- ☐ Provide time and space at home for my child to complete homework.
- ☐ Discuss appropriate behavior and attendance expectations with my child.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### School – I will:

- ☐ Monitor student attendance and behavior.
- ☐ Contact parent regarding student attendance and behavior as necessary.
- ☐ Provide academic support to student.
- ☐ Identify and provide academic and behavioral interventions to student as needed.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Signatures

_____ Student Signature	_____ Date	_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	_____ Date	_____ SART Chairperson Signature	_____ Date
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[District Letterhead]

#### 4) School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Referral Form 2012-2013

##### PLEASE NOTE:

- Prior to a SARB referral, a home visit must be conducted and documented.
- If the home visit was unsuccessful, documented contact must be made with person/s listed on the emergency card.
- SARB does not accept students who are on court probation and who already have a Deputy Probation Officer (DPO). Contact the DPO and tell him/her of the truancy.

School		Date	
Student Name:	Student Date of Birth (must be no younger than 6 years old)	Grade	
Street	Sex (circle one) Male      Female	Permanent ID#	
City, State, and Zip Code	Parent/Guardian Name(s)		
Parent/Guardian Date of Birth	Parent/Guardian Phone Number(s)		
Sibling Name(s) who are school age	Age	School	Attendance (if known)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

##### Special Needs

- Is a translator needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, what language: \_\_\_\_\_
- Is student in a 504 or Special Education Program? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, check appropriate program: ☐ RSP ☐ SDC ☐ 504 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
(If 504 or RSP or SDC, school must attach IEP/504 plan)

##### Reason for SARB Referral

- ☐ Broken SART Contract    ☐ SART No Show  
☐ Other Reason (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### Interventions Undertaken by Site

Site must show **three documented** attempts. Check all that apply and list dates for each intervention.

- ☐ SART (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ SST/COST (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Parent Conference (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Aeries Attendance Notes (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Phone Call 1 (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Phone Call 2 (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Phone Call 3 (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Home visit, mandated if no show to SART meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Outcomes from home visit: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4) School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Referral 2012-2013 (cont)

Student attendance is impacted by a variety of factors. Accurate and complete information is needed in order to appropriately support families. Please answer the following questions. Complete all questions, writing *none* or *unknown* if necessary. Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

**This information is required in order to submit a complete referral.**

1. Do you know of any challenges the family is facing that might be contributing to the student's absenteeism? Challenges might include parental unemployment, parental pressure to stay home to babysit, lack of transportation, health, substance abuse, transitional family.
2. What (if any) behavioral challenges does the student display at school?
3. How do the parents of the student respond to calls made by the school? (Example: do they attend scheduled meetings or return phone calls?)
4. Is the student in a group home or in foster care?
5. How does the student interact with peers and adults at school?
6. What reasons are given by the student for not attending school?
7. What reasons are given by the parent/guardian for the student not attending school?
8. What interventions have been provided to the student to help improve his/her attendance? Has the student's attendance improved since the implementation of these interventions?
9. How many 30+ tardies (elementary only) or unexcused absences are listed in Aeries?
10. What other factors/information (if any) are you aware of that might be contributing to the student's absenteeism? (Factors might include fear/intimidation from other students, low academic skills, low self esteem, teen parent, gang involvement, peer pressure).

## 4) School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Referral 2012-2013 (cont)

### SARB Referral Checklist

The items below are necessary for a complete SARB referral.

**All copies must be clear and legible.**

- ☐ SARB Referral Form w/correct and current contact information.
- ☐ Parent DOB \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent DOB is mandated for elementary and 6<sup>th</sup> grade referrals).
- ☐ Copy of Aeries student data sheet. *Verify and confirm that information is current/accurate.*
- ☐ Copy of pupil's *current attendance* and last year's attendance.
- ☐ Copy of pupil's most recent report card
- ☐ Copy of pupil's transcript
- ☐ Copy of the student's Assertive Discipline record.
- ☐ SART contract(s) for SART meeting(s) conducted.

If a SART No Show, evidence of contact with parent/guardian and/or details of contact with persons on Emergency Card, and current contact information. (Please ask the student for the family's current address/phone number. Please call the SARB office if the site has received returned mail from the post office.)

- ☐ Copy of NOT 1 and NOT 2 letters
- ☐ Written documentation of intervention taken by school and/or community resources (SST, after school programs, counseling, etc.)
- ☐ Listing of available site resources (student support programs, health clinics, after school programs, mental health services, early childhood center, etc.)
- ☐ Copies of documentation of school contacts made by mail, phone logs, and mandated home visitation
- ☐ Copy of pupil's Emergency Card (front and back)
- ☐ Copy of: the 504 Plan or current IEP for Special Ed or SDC students

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School site contact person: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

SART Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Internal use only (SARB Office)

Date referral packet received from school site \_\_\_\_\_

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_ accepted for a hearing \_\_\_\_\_ returned to school site (reason \_\_\_\_\_)

#### 4) School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Referral 2012-2013 (cont)

##### SARB Pupil Profile

For Secondary Students: This form must be completed by three of the student's core subject teachers and included in the SARB Referral

Student Name	Student Date of Birth	Today's Date
School	Grade	Special Ed (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> RSP <input type="checkbox"/> SDC <input type="checkbox"/> Speech <input type="checkbox"/> 504
Teacher	Subject	ELD <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Scholarship Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Observed Academic Behavior: ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Please check if applicable and observed:	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
1. Student makes effort to do what is assigned.			
2. Student completes assignments in class.			
3. Student is able to work independently.			
4. Student completes homework.			
5. Student monitors own work and corrects errors.			
6. Student has academic skills for assignments.			
7. Student is able to work at pace of peers.			
8. Student responds to directions.			
9. Student listens attentively.			
10. Student interacts appropriately with peers.			

Other comments:

Please return to: \_\_\_\_\_ By this date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix

1. Information and Support
2. Research: Attendance and Academic Success
3. Public Communication Protocols
4. Administration Regulation (5113) and Attendance Codes
5. Glossary and Acronym List

## 1. Information and Support

<b>Attendance and Discipline Support Services</b>	Theresa.Clincy@ousd.k12.ca.us
<b>If you need help with the SART/SARB Process</b>	Kirk.Lawson@ousd.k12.ca.us Debra.Long@ousd.k12.ca.us
<b>If you need SART/SARB Forms</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to the <a href="http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us">www.ousd.k12.ca.us</a></li> <li>2. Click on OUSD employee intranet</li> <li>3. Click on School Operations Library</li> <li>4. Click on Student Information and Attendance</li> <li>5. Click on Attendance Folder</li> </ol>
<b>If you need information on OUSD Board Policies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Policy 5113 “Absences and Excuses”</li> <li>• Administrative Regulation 5113 “Absences and Excuses”</li> <li>• Board Policy 5113.1 “Truancy”</li> <li>• Administrative Regulation 5113.1 “Truancy”</li> <li>• Principal’s Guide to Attendance Binder</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to the OUSD website at <a href="http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us">www.ousd.k12.ca.us</a></li> <li>2. Click on Governing Board</li> <li>3. Click on Policies</li> </ol>
<b>If you need help with attendance procedures</b>	See Attendance Reference Guides: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to <a href="http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us">www.ousd.k12.ca.us</a></li> <li>2. Click on OUSD employee intranet</li> <li>3. Click on school operations library</li> <li>4. Click on student information and attendance</li> <li>5. Click on attendance folder</li> </ol>
<b>If you need research information about chronic absences</b>	<a href="http://www.attendanceworks.org">www.attendanceworks.org</a>
<b>If you need copies of the K-1 Chronic Absence Toolkit</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to <a href="http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us">www.ousd.k12.ca.us</a></li> <li>2. Click on departments</li> <li>3. Click attendance and discipline support services</li> <li>4. Click on toolkit</li> </ol>

## 2. Research: Attendance and Academic Success

What does research say about the correlation between attendance and academic success?

- Students chronically absent in k-1 will not read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- 6th grade chronic absences are early warning signs for students at risk of dropping out.
- 9th grade good attendance can predict graduation rates better than 8th grade test scores.

Research articles follow:

1. The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, *Grades and Attendance*
2. Attendance Works, *A Summary of Key Research on Chronic Absence*



# Freshman Year: The Make-it or Break-it Year

Let's say you put all your freshmen in one room and had to predict who among them would be graduating in four years. What factors would you consider when making those predictions? Their 8th grade test scores? The elementary school they attended? What about their race? Or age? Or family income?

IN REALITY, THOSE FACTS DON'T TELL YOU MUCH.

## ☐ What really counts when it comes to predicting graduation: **GRADES AND ATTENDANCE.**

How do we know this? Because researchers at the University of Chicago—the Consortium on Chicago School Research—have spent years trying to understand what really matters when it comes to graduating from Chicago Public Schools. Working in cooperation with the district, the Consortium researchers have analyzed years of data—surveys, standardized tests, student grades, attendance records—and uncovered some surprising connections.

The freshman year is the most important year of high school and a crucial chance for a fresh start. Strong students can quickly fall off course if they start cutting classes and blowing off homework. And students who struggled in elementary school can turn things around if they come to school every day and aim for a B average.

Based on earlier research about On-Track Indicators, we know this is the year that will set the stage for whether high school students will graduate and whether they will be ready for college. It sounds simple, but there is much room for improvement.

### THAT'S BECAUSE:

- More than half of Chicago freshmen fail a course.
- About 40 percent miss more than a month of school in that first year (which includes class cutting).
- The average GPA is lower than a "C."

This research doesn't suggest that teachers should make it easier to earn a B in their class; in fact, that could harm students' subsequent course performance. Instead, it suggests teachers are critical in shaping student outcomes. The classroom and school context set the stage for good grades and attendance. Research demonstrates that grades and attendance are better in schools where students trust their teachers to help them and where students see their coursework as meaningful for their future.

Our new research doesn't offer pat solutions to the drop-out crisis facing Chicago and many other urban districts—its causes are far too complicated for that. What the data does tell us is that schools can improve their graduation rates by paying attention to the right things and the right freshmen right away.

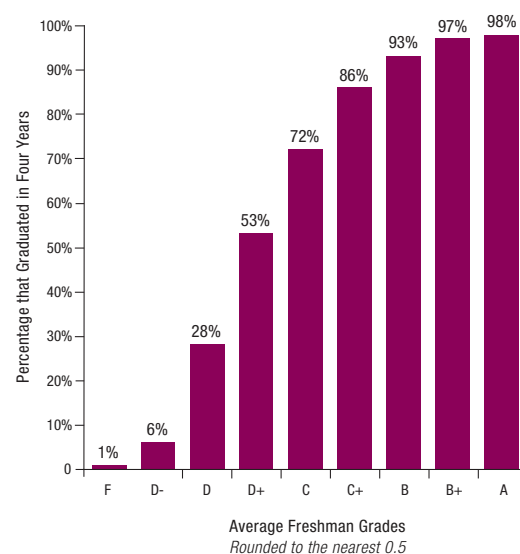
Consider these key findings...

## Grades and Attendance

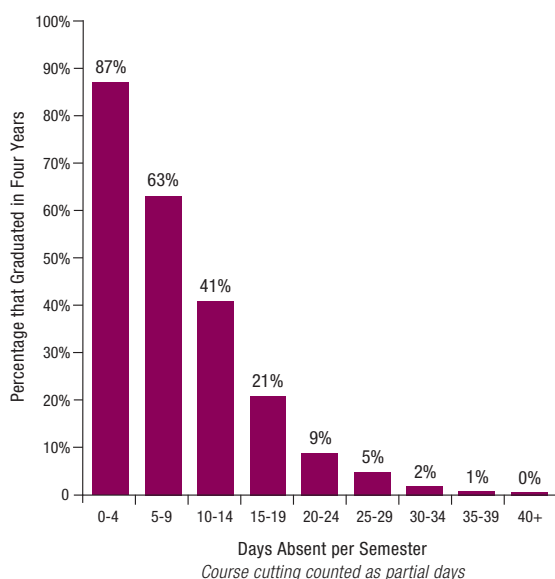
## GRADES

- More than 95 percent of students with a B average or better in their freshman year graduate.
- Freshmen who earn a B average or better have an 80-percent chance of finishing high school with at least a 3.0 GPA.
- Freshmen with less than a C average are more likely to drop out than graduate.
- Course grades also are the best predictors of test score gains and college graduation.
- People think that grades are subjective, but there is little evidence of grade inflation in Chicago high schools.

Freshman Grades Predict Graduation



Missing Classes Puts Graduation at Risk



## ABSENCES

- Attendance rates vary substantially across schools, even when comparing schools with similar student achievement and background—by as much as one month a year.
- Nearly 90 percent of freshmen who miss less than a week of school per semester graduate, regardless of their 8th grade test scores.
- Freshmen who miss more than two weeks of school flunk, on average, at least two classes—no matter whether they arrive at high school with top test scores or below-average scores. In fact, freshmen who arrive with high test scores but miss two weeks of school per semester are more likely to fail a course than freshmen with low test scores who just miss a week.



## So...what can you do?

- ✓ **You may have your greatest impact** with struggling, just-below-average freshmen—those with GPAs of C- or D who miss one or two weeks of school per semester. These middle students have about the same chances of graduating as they have of dropping out, yet are least likely to be identified for help.
- ✓ **Reach out early to each student whose grades and attendance start to slip.** Freshmen—regardless of their background—are more likely to come to class and pass courses in schools where they feel teachers can be trusted, give them individual attention and show concern.
- ✓ **Make sure your class is organized coherently** so that students know exactly what they need to do to earn good grades. Students can lose trust in teachers with inconsistent grading practices, resulting in less effort and lower attendance. Also, help your students make connections between the work they're doing in class and the skills they'll need in the future.
- ✓ **Work collaboratively with your colleagues.** Absences are lower than expected in schools where teachers take collective responsibility for the whole school, not just their own students.

# A Summary of Key Research on Chronic Absence

A growing body of research, including the pieces below, reveal the prevalence of chronic absence and its critical role in student achievement. This research also shows that chronic absence can be addressed when school districts, communities, and policymakers work together to monitor the problem and implement solutions that address the underlying causes.

## General

- Balfanz, R., and Byrnes, V., *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools, Baltimore, Md., 2012. This report analyzes data on chronic absenteeism at the state level to begin the process of mapping its extent and characteristics. Although currently only a handful of states collect data on chronic absenteeism, results from a sample of states suggest that an estimated 10-15% of students in the U.S. are chronically absent each year. The report also highlights some promising practices among cities, school districts and nonprofits to combat chronic absenteeism. The authors offer policy recommendations on tracking and reporting chronic absence data and evidence-based interventions.
- Bruner, Charles, Anne Discher and Hedy Chang, *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*, Child and Family Policy Center and Attendance Works, November 2011. This study confirms the premise that districts and schools may fail to detect high levels of chronic absence because the problem is easily masked by average daily attendance, one of the most commonly calculated attendance measures. While many educators assume a 95 percent ADA rate is an indicator of good attendance, the authors find that it can sometimes mask a problem with chronic absence.
- Epstein, J. L. and Sheldon, S. B., *Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement*, Journal of Educational Research, 95, 308-318, 2002. This study discusses the results of a longitudinal data analysis of schools' rates of daily student attendance and chronic absenteeism and specific partnership practices that were implemented to help increase or sustain student attendance. The data suggest that schools may be able to increase student attendance in elementary school by implementing specific family and community involvement activities.
- Sanchez, Monica., *Truancy and Chronic Absence in Redwood City*. John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities, Palo Alto, Calif., April 2012. A study of chronic absenteeism in the Redwood City School District found the highest rates in kindergarten and 12th grade. The study also found that the largest, statistically significant factor in determining whether a student was chronically absent was their chronic absence status in the prior year. Additionally, the number of days a student was absent had a significant negative effect on California Standards Test percentiles in both math and English Language Arts for students in grades 3 through 8, as well as on GPA in high school students. Middle- and higher-achieving students were found to be at greatest risk of academic decline due to chronic absence.

## Early Education and Elementary

- *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*, Applied Survey Research, May 2011. This study suggests that attendance in the early grades is critical to sustaining the school readiness skills that preschool or Head Start programs can help children to develop. The report found that students who arrived at school academically ready to learn—but then missed 10 percent of their kindergarten and first grade years—scored an average of 60 points below similar students with good attendance on third-grade reading tests.

- **Chang, Hedy and Romero, Mariajose, *Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty, New York, NY, September 2008.** This report documents the consequences, prevalence, potential causes and possible solutions to children missing extended periods of school in grades K-3rd. Although students must be present and engaged to learn, thousands of this country's youngest students are academically at-risk because of extended absences when they first embark upon their school careers. Nationally, an estimated one in 10 kindergarten and first grade students are chronically absent. The report recommends that schools, communities and families monitor and promote attendance, as well as to identify and address barriers to good attendance.
- **Connolly, Faith and Olson, Linda S., *Early Elementary Performance and Attendance in Baltimore City Schools' Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten*, Baltimore Education Research Consortium, Baltimore, Md., March 2012.** This brief looks at attendance in the early grades with particular focus on Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) and Kindergarten (K) and follows these young students over time. The study finds that students with low attendance in both PreK and K often continue to have low attendance, are more likely to be retained by grade 3 and on average have lower academic outcomes than peers with better attendance. The impact can be minimized, however, by improved attendance in later grades. Head Start students began with and maintained high rates of attendance compared with comparable students. They initially underperformed in reading and math but by Grade 3, they performed as well as their peers on the state assessment.
- **Ready, Douglas D., *Socioeconomic Disadvantage, School Attendance, and Early Cognitive Development, The Differential Effects of School Exposure*, Sociology of Education, October 2010.** Despite the substantial body of research documenting strong relationships between social class and children's cognitive abilities, researchers have generally neglected the extent to which school absenteeism exacerbates social class differences in academic development among young children. This study suggests that missing school in the early grades has a more powerful influence on literacy development for low-income students than it does for their more affluent peers. Put another way, school matters more to children from low-income families.

## Secondary School

- **Allensworth, E. M., and Easton, J. Q., *What Matters for Staying On-track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A Close Look at Course Grades, Failures, and Attendance in the Freshman Year*, University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research, Chicago, IL, 2007.** In this study of the freshman year of high school, researchers found that attendance in this pivotal transition year was a key indicator of whether students would finish high school. The study also found attendance and studying more predictive of dropout than test scores or other student characteristics. In fact, 9th grade attendance was a better predictor of dropout than 8th grade test scores.
- **Balfanz, Robert, Lisa Herzog and Douglas J. MacIver, *Preventing Student Disengagement and Keeping Students on the Graduation Path in Urban Middle-Grades Schools: Early Identification and Effective Interventions*, Educational Psychologist, 42(4), 223–235, 2007.** This study examines the application of an early identification and intervention system for students in the middle grades to prevent student disengagement and increase graduation rates. The authors use follow a cohort of students to demonstrate how indicators reflecting poor attendance, misbehavior and course failure in sixth grade can be used to identify 60% of the students who will not graduate from high school. by combining effective whole-school reforms with attendance, behavioral, and extra-help interventions, graduation rates can be substantially increased.

## For more information:

Visit the Attendance Works website at [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org). We've got a news archive of past stories, case studies and data tools. For regular updates, follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook or sign up for our blog feed.

Contact director Hedy Chang at [hedy@attendanceworks.org](mailto:hedy@attendanceworks.org)

### 3. Public Communication Protocols

Although we want students to attend school regularly, sometimes absences are unavoidable due to illness.

Please contact the OUSD Health and Wellness Services Department for public communication protocols if:

1. Five or more students are out with the same symptoms school wide, or
2. Three or more students are out with the same symptoms within a close time period.

#### Health and Wellness Services

746 Grand Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94610  
510-273-1510

### 4. Administrative Regulation (5113) and Attendance Codes

<b>Unverified Absences (A)</b>	The unverified absences code is the default when a teacher marks a student absent. An unverified absence should only be verified after contact (e.g., note, phone call) with a parent or guardian.
<b>DHP</b>	This code is used if a student is awaiting a disciplinary hearing pane.
<b>Illness (I)</b>	This code is used if a student is ill.
<b>Truant Tardy (M)</b>	This code is used when a student is more than 30 minutes late to class.
<b>Personal Leave (P)</b>	This code is used for a State-approved reason only: a court appearance, an employment conference, a religious holiday or ceremony, attendance at a religious retreat. (Attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed 4 hours per semester).
<b>Unexcused (U)</b>	This code is used when an absence does not meet State standards for excused absences; it is also used when a student is truant from school without parent consent.
<b>Excused (X)</b>	This code is used for medical/dental/vision appointment, quarantine, funeral, jury duty, illness of student's child, time to serve as precinct board member. (Student is allowed 1 day if funeral is in California and 3 days if funeral is out of state.)
<b>Physician's Verification</b>	This code is used when a student has had 14 absences in the school year for illness verified by: 1) a written note; 2) a telephone conversation with parent/guardian; 3) a home visit. Any further absences for illness must be verified by a physician. Failure to provide verification from the physician, school nurse, or other school personnel will result in those additional absences being recorded as Unexcused (U).

## 5. Glossary and Acronym List

<b>ADA</b>	Average Daily Attendance
<b>ADSS</b>	Attendance and Discipline Support Services
<b>CCR</b>	California Code of Regulations
<b>Chronic Absence</b>	Missing 10% or more days in a school year
<b>COST</b>	Coordination of Services Team
<b>CSSSP</b>	Community Schools Strategic Site Plan
<b>DHP</b>	Disciplinary Hearing Panel
<b>DPO</b>	Deputy Probation Officer
<b>Excused Absence</b>	Medical appointment; quarantined, funeral, jury duty, or illness.
<b>EL</b>	English Learners
<b>NOT</b>	Notice of Truancy
<b>OUSD</b>	Oakland Unified School District
<b>SARB</b>	School Attendance Review Board
<b>SART</b>	Student Attendance Review Team
<b>SST</b>	Student Success Team
<b>Tardy</b>	A student who arrives late to school or class.
<b>Truant</b>	A student who has 3 unexcused absences and or is late more than 30 minutes 3 times during the school year.
<b>Unexcused Absence-</b>	An absence that does not meet State standards for an excused absence
<b>Unverified Absence</b>	Used when a student marked absent by a teacher is changed to excused/ unexcused once the absence is verified after contact with parent/guardian.



Every Day Counts.  
Attend Today,  
Succeed Tomorrow...



OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools,  
Thriving Students