No Matter What: Realizing the Power of Chronic Absence Data to Ensure Safe, Supportive Schools for All Students

December 7, 2016
Every Student, Every Day National Partners

- Department of Education
- My Brother's Keeper
- Attendance Works
- Everyone Graduates Center
- Trust for America's Health
- Healthy Schools Campaign
Poll: At what level are you engaged in?

- School
- District
- State
- Federal
- Multiple levels
Why Realizing the Power of Chronic Absence is Essential: What is at stake?

Jessica’s Story
How to Realize the Power of Chronic Absence Data

Effective **systems of support** rely on the effective use of chronic absence data.

- **Actionable data**: Early and ongoing identification of at-risk students
- **Positive Engagement**: Ensuring that students and families know that schools and communities care for them
- **Capacity Building**: Enhancing adults and systems’ ability to understand and meet the needs of all students
- **Shared Accountability**: Chronic absenteeism is everyone’s responsibility
- **Strategic Partnerships**: Schools need to be connected to organizations and agencies across a community to support all students
Ongoing implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states, districts, schools, and communities the unique opportunity to take systems of support to scale in order to ensure students’ daily attendance, high achievement, and health and wellness.

- **Titles I, II, and IV** include allowable activities and approaches, including educator and staff training, related to addressing chronic absence.

- States must now report **annual chronic absence data** on all students disaggregated by subgroup.
Additionally, ESSA enhances state and local accountability by requiring at least **five measures** of student performance, including:

- Student engagement
- Educator engagement
- Access to and completion of advanced coursework
- Postsecondary readiness
- School climate and safety
- Any other indicator the state chooses that meets the requirements of this clause (e.g. chronic absenteeism)
## ESSA: States must establish a measure of school quality or student success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronic Absence</th>
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</table>
| **Valid**       | ✓  
| **Reliable**    | ✓  
| **Calculated the same for all schools and school districts across the state** | ✓  
| **Can be disaggregated by student sub-population** | ✓  
| **Is a proven indicator of school quality** | ✓  
| **Is a proven indicator of student success** | ✓  

Chronic Absence Meets Key Criteria for School Quality and Student Success
ESSA: A Unique Opportunity

• ESSA plan **timelines** are looming.

• This virtual summit is meant to support states and districts in designing and enacting their plans.

• Important to prioritize the early years and PreK-Kindergarten since chronic absence and its effects manifest early among children and families.

• Without sufficient investment in early identification, prevention, and intervention, efforts to boost attendance and achievement could be undermined.
Critical Importance of Interagency Partnerships

• Schools cannot do this work alone.

• Supporting all students requires inter- and intra-agency coordination to address students' varied needs, including health, housing, nutritional, and justice concerns.

• System leaders should prioritize interagency partnerships and incentivize work that breaks down silos between agencies and schools.

• A plethora of resources exist to support interagency partnerships.
Critical Importance of Interagency Partnerships

• Examples of effective interagency partnership to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism include:
  – ED, HUD, HHS, DOJ, and White House partnership to enhance federal policy: MBK Every Student, Every Day Initiative
  – Kent School Services Network (Kent Co., Michigan)
  – New York City Community Schools Approach
  – Hayward (CA) Schools/District Attorney Partnership
Summit Overview

1. Why Chronic Absence Matters

2. What It Takes to Reduce Chronic Absence

3. Making It Real: Featured Guest Presentations
   - What have you done to reduce chronic absence? What’s been the impact? Who’s been involved?
   - What helps to advance the work? What can districts, states, and the federal government do?

4. National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center
What It Takes to Reduce Chronic Absence
## What is Chronic Absence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Average Daily Attendance</strong></th>
<th>How many students show up to school every day? The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Truancy</strong></td>
<td>Who is missing school <strong>without permission</strong>? Typically refers only to unexcused absences. Each state has the authority to define truancy and when it triggers legal intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronic Absence</strong></td>
<td>Who is missing so much school they are <strong>academically at risk</strong>? Broadly means missing too much school for any reason -- excused, unexcused, etc. Most researchers and a growing number of states define it as missing 10% of school. OCR currently defines it as missing 15 days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional analysis found chronic absence is both widespread and highly concentrated.

Table 1. Where are the Nation’s CA Students found, By Quarter and By District? 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Total Number of Students Chronically Absent (CA)</th>
<th>Number of Districts</th>
<th>Average Number of Students CA</th>
<th>Min Number Students CA</th>
<th>Max number of Students CA</th>
<th>Percent of All Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>6,472,466</td>
<td>16,240</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72,376</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Quarter</td>
<td>1,618,012</td>
<td>13,943 *</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Quarter</td>
<td>1,617,319</td>
<td>1,642</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Quarter</td>
<td>1,618,036</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>1,806</td>
<td>5,729</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Quarter</td>
<td>1,619,079</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>13,057</td>
<td>5,817</td>
<td>72,376</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes 1,798 districts reporting 0 chronically absent students
Over 50% of chronically absent students were found in 4% of districts and 12% of schools.

These included 2 types of districts: relatively affluent, & large but still have significant number of students in poverty and high poverty, racially segregated urban districts with high rates of chronic absence.
What about rural communities?

Many small, poor rural school districts have few students but face high rates of chronic absenteeism.

See Chronic Absence Story Map at http://arcg.is/29jPgaZ
What are implications for action?

1. Invest in consistent and accurate data collection
2. Use data to understand need and disproportionate impact in order to target resources
3. Leverage data to identify and celebrate bright spots
4. Share data with key stakeholders and equip them to unpack barriers and take action
5. Create shared accountability, leveraging ESSA

All states and districts should use current data to determine how much chronic absence is a challenge for students.
Use 10% definition to promote early warning

- Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:

  - In first 2 weeks: 2 absences
  - In first month (4 weeks): 2-3 absences
  - In first 2 months (8 weeks): 4 absences

Missing 10% any time after
Unpack and address contributing factors to chronic absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Aversion</th>
<th>Disengagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused</td>
<td>• Lack of access to health or dental care</td>
<td>• Child struggling academically or socially</td>
<td>• Lack of engaging relevant, culturally responsive instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t realize just missing 2 days per month can affect learning</td>
<td>• Chronic illness</td>
<td>• Bullying</td>
<td>• No meaningful relationships with adults in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attendance only matters in the older grades</td>
<td>• Poor Transportation</td>
<td>• Ineffective and exclusionary school discipline</td>
<td>• Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trauma</td>
<td>• Parents had negative school experience</td>
<td>• Poor school climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No safe path to school</td>
<td>• Undiagnosed disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Homelessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommended Site-Level Strategies

A. Recognize Good and Improved Attendance

B. Engage Students and Parents

C. Monitor Attendance Data and Practice

D. Provide Personalized Early Outreach

E. Develop Programmatic Response to Barriers
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

**TIER 1**
- Recognize good & improved attendance
- Educate & engage students and families
- Monitor attendance data & set goals
- Establish positive & engaging school climate
- Identify & address common barriers to getting to school

**TIER 2**
- Provide personalized early outreach
- Meet to develop tailored action plan
- Connect to a caring mentor

**TIER 3**
- Intensive case management with coordination of public agency and legal response as needed

- Students who missed 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
- Students missing 10–19% (moderate chronic absence)
- Students missing 5–9% (at risk)
- Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
Positive Engagement: Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

Actionable Data: Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.

Positive Engagement

Actionable Data

Capacity Building

Shared Accountability

Capacity Building

Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

Strategic partnerships

between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients

Shared Accountability: Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.
Proposed Pathway for Change: Cultivating peer learning to inform broader policy change and practice

Advance practice through peer learning

Inform actions w/ insights from local practice

• Policymakers
• Education Leaders & Assoc. (K-12 & ECE)
• Associations of public health agencies (housing, health, social services, transportation)
• Unions
• Parent Organizations
• Advocacy organizations
• Philanthropy
• Others

Spread work through TA and policy

Peer opportunities to:
• Compare data
• Share, demonstrate & learn about best practices
• Identify & problem-solve common challenges

Ongoing peer learning, technical assistance, administrative guidance, regulations, legislation, etc. promote best practices & systemic change
Today’s **featured guests** will talk about what they are doing at school, district, and state levels to reduce chronic absence, including:

- What’s been the impact
- Who’s been involved

The following **panel discussion** will cover cross-cutting issues in the work to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism in our schools.
Featured Guests & Panel Discussion

Maribel Childress, Principal
Monitor Elementary School
Springdale, AR

Tammatha Woodhouse, Principal
Excel Academy at Francis M. Wood
Baltimore, MD

Nancy Sarra, Superintendent
Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT

Robin Shobe, MS CCC-SLP
Education Specialist
Oregon Department of Education
Office of Learning ~ Student Services
Monitor Elementary School  
Springdale, Arkansas

**Flight Plan to Reduce Chronic Absences**

- 735 Students PreK – 5th grade
- 88% Qualify for free meals
- 53% English language learners
- 10 Languages spoken
- 38% English as primary language
- 33% Spanish as primary language
- 25% Marshallese as primary language
Goal Setting
Always Welcoming Customer Service
Making Personal Connections
Engaging Students

Attendance Chart

TURN THIS

INTO THIS

Your Encouraging Here
Never Giving Up
Excel Academy

• Excel Academy @ Francis M. Wood serves students who are overage and under credited in grades 6-12.
  • offers supports to address the social and environmental issues that plague our students daily.
  • is designed to move students towards graduation and beyond through an acceleration model.
• 21.4% of the student population receive special education services and 88.6% of the student population were eligible for Free and Reduced Meals

• 2012-13 SY – 2014-15 SY tripled 9th grade promotion rates and doubled 10th grade promotion rates
Issues Impacting Student Attendance

• Homelessness - 15/3% (self-reported; actual number is much higher)
• Substance Abuse - 13/2% (actual number is much higher)
• Teen Pregnancy - 43/9%
• Mental Health – 119/25%
• Lack of Adequate Family Financial Resources – 107/22%
• Student Incarceration - 95/20%
• Total Population- 479  Special Education-133/28%
Action to Improve Attendance

Homelessness

• Identification

• Provide clothing voucher for free school uniform and school supplies

• Connect students and families with housing resources in the community.

• School-based: Clothes Closet, Food Pantry, After School Supper

Partners:

• Bon Secours Hospital,
• Maryland Food Bank,
• Northrup & Grumman
Substance Abuse

• Curriculum Offering: Issues of Drug Abuse
• Identification: self, parents, teachers, clinicians
• In-school substance abuse counseling

Partners:
• Treatment Resources for Youth
• Mountain Manor Treatment Center
Actions to Improve Student Attendance

Teen Pregnancy

• Educational Support Group for pregnant and parenting students
• Assistance with Childcare Voucher Process
• Monthly Literacy Sessions with Parent and Child
• Modified schedules are provided for students who have childcare challenges

Partners:
• Bon Secour Hospital
• Mercy Medical System
• Baltimore City Department of Social Services
Mental Health

- 3 full Time Social Workers
- 1 Full Time School Psychologist
- 2 full Time School Guidance Counselors
- Mentoring Support Services
- Referral for Community health Services
Actions to Improve Student Attendance

Lack of Adequate Family Financial Resources

• Career Research Development course seeks out student employment and internship opportunities, resume writing, and interviewing skills

• Modified schedules are provided for students who currently work full and part-time.

• In-school and off-site job fairs
Actions to Improve Student Attendance

Adjudicated Students

• Encompass about 20% of total population
• On-site Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Supervision and counseling

Partnerships:
• University of Maryland Baltimore County
• Choice Program
• Northrup & Grumman
New Britain District Profile (2015-2016)

- Approximately 10,000 students in the district
- 5,093 elementary school students
- 64% of students identify as Hispanic
- 14% of students identify as Black
- 16% of students are English Language Learners
- 81% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch
- 18% of students receive special education services
Changes in Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Level (2011-2016)
Intervention and Best Practices

Professional Development for ALL stakeholder groups

- PD for building admins, social service teams, community agencies, funders, etc.
  - Understanding the difference between ADA and Chronic Absenteeism
  - How chronic absenteeism impacts your building
  - Understanding what the root cause of chronic absenteeism is
    - Problems: systemic, health issues in community, policy at the board level
    - Culture and climate of each building
    - Family dynamics
  - Trained site administrators and teams to interpret attendance data, adopt best practices and engage in peer learning.
Intervention and Best Practices

How do we build tools for staff to address these barriers?

- Attendance teams at the building level
  - Analyze data, assess situation & ensure appropriate interventions are put in place for student success
- Send chronic absenteeism reports to schools every 10 days.
  - Indicates how many and which students are chronically absent.

Strategic Actions

- Weekly attendance teams with chronic absenteeism reports every ten days
- Bi-Weekly reports to Board of Education with attendance reports sorted by building
- SRBI/RTI Procedures and Strategies
- Home visits throughout the school year
- Close Collaboration between DCF, court support services and mental health agencies
Next Steps

- Focus on student and family engagement
- Focus on student engagement via developmentally appropriate practice
- Summer Enrichment Experience (SEE) for at-risk students (NSLA Award of Excellence)
- Out of school time programming as an intervention
  - Take students who attend SEE and make sure they have a spot in the after-school programs
  - Lengthen school day and school year with experiential learning for at-risk students
- Expand out of school summer experiences for grades 4-8.
  - Currently serve K-3 – need to replicate best practices
- Re-Imagining/Leveraging Family Resource Center Staff to reach BT3 population
- Strategies at the building levels – Part of their school improvement plans
Percent of Oregon students chronically absent in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school year [1].
On-Time Graduation Rate by 12th Grade Attendance (ODE, 2015)
Populations most impacted

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Students with Disabilities
- Students economically disadvantaged
- Students of color
- Students living in rural communities (versus towns, suburban, urban)
Healthy kids learn better;
Kids who receive a quality education and graduate high school go on to lead happier, healthier and longer lives.
House Bill 4002 (HB 4002): Chronic Absenteeism Statewide Plan

1. A process from **publicly disclosing annual** information on chronic absenteeism rate for each school & **adopt statewide definition of CA**

2. **Guidance and best practices** for all schools and school districts to use to track, monitor, and addressed chronic absence and improve attendance

3. Process for **identifying schools in need of support** to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve attendance

4. A description of **technical assistance** is available to schools identified as needing support, including technical assistance that will be provided by the Oregon Department of Education

5. The **estimated costs** associated with implementing the plan
A View of Oregon’s data

- Tier III: 1-5% Schools - 37 schools
- Tier II: 6-10% Schools - 85 Schools
- Tier I: 10-30% of Schools - 1,035 Schools
- Oregon = 1,218

- Tier III: >20% CA
  - 29% of Oregon Schools (n = 353)
  - Tier III: 10-20% CA
  - 50% of Oregon Schools (n = 607)
  - Tier I: >10% CA
  - 20% of Oregon Schools
Components of a System to Address Chronic Absenteeism

- **Data System**: Definitions of CA, ability to pull CA data vs ADA daily (school, district), pull CA data quarterly/annually (district, region, state). Early Warning Systems

- **MTSS**: to identify schools & as a framework for support
  - Screening, Progress Monitoring, Fidelity, Data-based problem-solving

- **Cross-sector Collaboration**: with community agencies, health, housing, family support, etc.

- **Equity**: collecting the right data for all underserved students, focus on EBPs that reflect root causes of disengagement, routine review of disaggregated data

- **Professional Development**: Peer learning networks, webinars/remote learning (restorative practices, PBIS, Tiered strategies, implicit basis, STEM/CTE, classroom management, data review, etc)

- **State-wide and/or Local Messaging**: Building awareness, educational in nature, viewed by educators/all as a priority

- **Coaching**: School Team leader, District Coach, Regional Coach/Specialist (ESD/RAC), State Coordinator

- **Teaming**: School, District, Region (ESD/RAC), State
Thank You!

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

NATIONAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND SUCCESS CENTER

‘LEVERAGING EWS AND SUCCESS MENTORS TO KEEP KIDS ON TRACK’

Bob Balfanz, EGC and Patricia Balana, JFF
December 7, 2016
Vision:

- Develop **Early Warning System Network** and continue **My Brothers Keeper Success Mentor Initiative** .... provide resources, peer learning and technical assistance support to enable use of early warning systems and success mentors aimed at reducing chronic absenteeism and keeping students on track to graduation

By:

- building on ‘**Every Student, Every Day**’ efforts
- supporting nationwide implementation of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**
- Focusing on **School Success Mentor sites**, **My Brothers Keeper**, and **School Improvement Grants (SIG) sites** to implement EWS, Success Mentors and address chronic absenteeism
Two Communities of Practice, one common space:
- Early Warning Systems - SIG schools;
- My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Success Mentors cities.

GOALS:
- Develop trusting, long-term relationships between participants
- Disseminate and explore research and evidence-based approaches to address chronic absenteeism, behavior and effort, and course failure
- Provide a safe, judgment-free venue for participants to share information/test ideas.....in the spirit of continuous improvement

Website (currently under development) central hub for activity within the Communities of Practice
COP ACTIVITIES

> **A website** with discussion boards, web-based resources, in-depth information about the initiative, and space to connect to other areas of the CoP.

> **Monthly communication** to all CoP members

> **Continuation** of MBK Success mentor districts monthly team leader and principal calls

> **Formal webinars** on key components of Early Warning Systems

> **Office hours** with Center experts

> **Online certification** that will be available for members of the CoP and required for at least one member of each team that will be accessing on-site technical assistance.

> **A national convening** for in-person learning and sharing with other cities and teams.

> **On-site technical support** for formal training of school staff, targeted work in areas of need, or problem solving to address key issues.
NEXT STEPS

- Launch - National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center
- Application for Technical Assistance (sites visits – early 2017)
- Website development
- Webinars – commencing December 2017
NEXT STEPS

Communication to states, districts and schools

Questions:

Contact: Patricia Balana, Jobs for the Future

pbalana@jff.org
Thank you for your commitment to eliminating chronic absenteeism and building system of support for all students—no matter what.

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

President Barack Obama