

The Power of Positive Connections

*Taking Stock of Whether We Are
Reducing Chronic Absence through
PEOPLE*

*(Priority Early Outreach for
Positive Linkages and Engagement)*





Instructions

1. Each person: please fill out the self-assessment form.
2. Use dots to show what your responses are using charts on the wall.

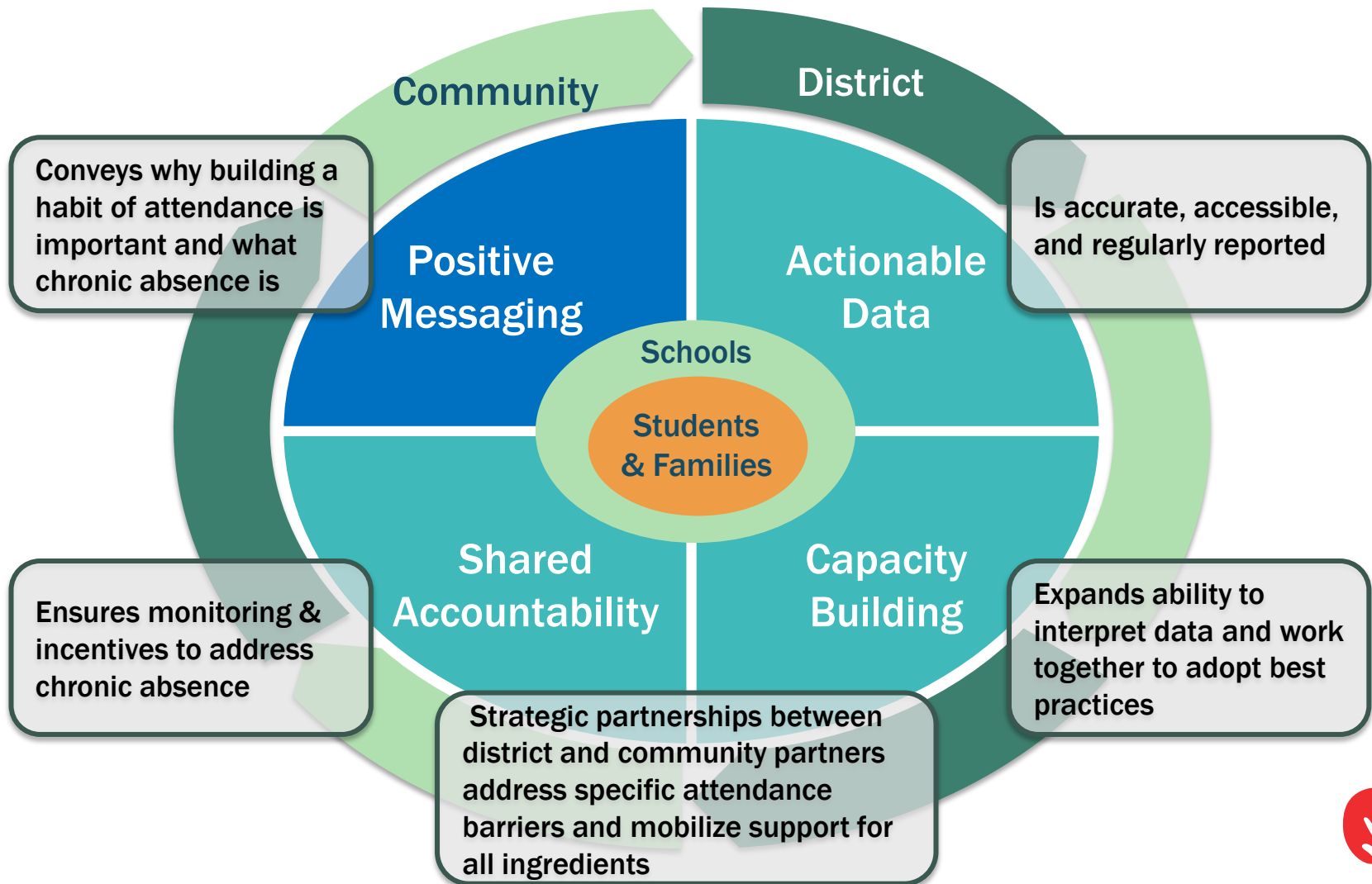
Use the dot color that reflect your position.

 = schools  = legal system

 = community partner  = student/parent



Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



Instructions: **Positive Messaging**

1. Find a partner
2. What do you notice when you look at the charts for **Positive Messaging**?

Where are areas of strength?

Where are major gaps?



Strategies for Positive Messaging

- a. Send home handouts with information and tips about attendance.
- b. Talk with parents early and often to share the value of good attendance and let them know that you are there to help.
- c. Consider using time at a parent event to demonstrate the importance of attendance.
- d. Utilize written commitments to encourage good attendance such as a pledge or the attendance goal work sheet.



Utilize Our Online Resources



MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS



To improve my child's attendance, I can commit to the following:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We will review progress to meet this goal at the next Parent-Teacher Conference.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will reward my child for attending school every day with _____ (i.e. A visit to the park, extra screen time, a special treat)
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- If my child consistently complains of a stomachache or headache and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will send him/her to school anyway and call Counselor _____ so that he/she can check in with him/her during the school day.
- If my child has a cold but no fever (less than 100 degrees), I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don't have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one.
- I will find a relative, friend, or neighbor who can take my child to school if I can't make it or if he/she missed the bus.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after 3:30 p.m.

- My child was present _____ days.
- My child was absent _____ days.
- My child's current attendance rate is _____%.
- My goal for next year is to improve my child's attendance to _____%.



To learn more, please visit
www.attendanceworks.org or www.ar-gle.net



**Ayude a su hijo a tener éxito en la escuela:
Creando el hábito de buena asistencia a temprana edad**
¡El éxito escolar va de la mano con una buena asistencia escolar!

¿SABÍA USTED QUE...?

- Empezando en el kinder, muchas ausencias pueden causar que los niños se atrasen en la escuela.
 - Faltar el 10% (más o menos faltar 18 días en el kinder) puede bajar el rendimiento en el primer grado y hacer que cueste más aprender a leer.
 - Los estudiantes se pueden seguir atrasando aunque sólo falten uno o dos días durante varias semanas.
 - Las llegadas tarde en los primeros grados pueden predecir que el estudiante tendrá mala asistencia en los años siguientes.
 - La falta de asistencia a la escuela puede afectar a todos en la clase, ya que el maestro tiene que disminuir el aprendizaje para ayudar a los niños a ponerse al día.
 - Las escuelas pueden perder dinero para programas educacionales porque frecuentemente la asistencia es la base para la asignación de los fondos.
- Asistir regularmente a la escuela, ayuda a los niños a sentirse mejor en la escuela—y consigo mismos. Empezar a crear este hábito en la edad preescolar, los hará aprender rápidamente la importancia de ir a la escuela a la hora indicada y todos los días. La buena asistencia ayudará a los niños a tener éxito en la preparatoria, la universidad y en el trabajo.

¿QUÉ PUEDE USTED HACER

- Establezca una hora consistente para acostarse y la rutina de cada mañana.
- Prepare la ropa y las mochilas la noche anterior.
- Averigüe el día en que empieza la escuela y asegúrese que su hijo tenga las vacunas requeridas.
- Presente a su hijo a sus maestros y compañeros de clase antes que la escuela empiece, para ayudarlo con la transición a la escuela.
- Sólo deje que su niño se quede en casa si está realmente enfermo. Tenga en mente que las quejas de un dolor de estómago o de cabeza pueden ser señal de ansiedad y no una razón para quedarse en casa.
- Si su hijo parece ansioso por ir a la escuela, hable con los maestros, consejeros u otros padres para que le aconsejen sobre cómo hacerlo sentir cómodo y motivado a asistir a la escuela.
- Prepare opciones para llegar a la escuela si algo inesperado sucede. Contacte con anterioridad un familiar, un vecino u otro padre para que le ayude en esos días.
- Evite citas médicas y viajes prolongados durante el tiempo de escuela.
- Contacte al personal de la escuela u oficiales de la comunidad para encontrar ayuda sobre transporte, vivienda, empleo o problemas de salud.

¿Cuándo las ausencias se vuelven problema?



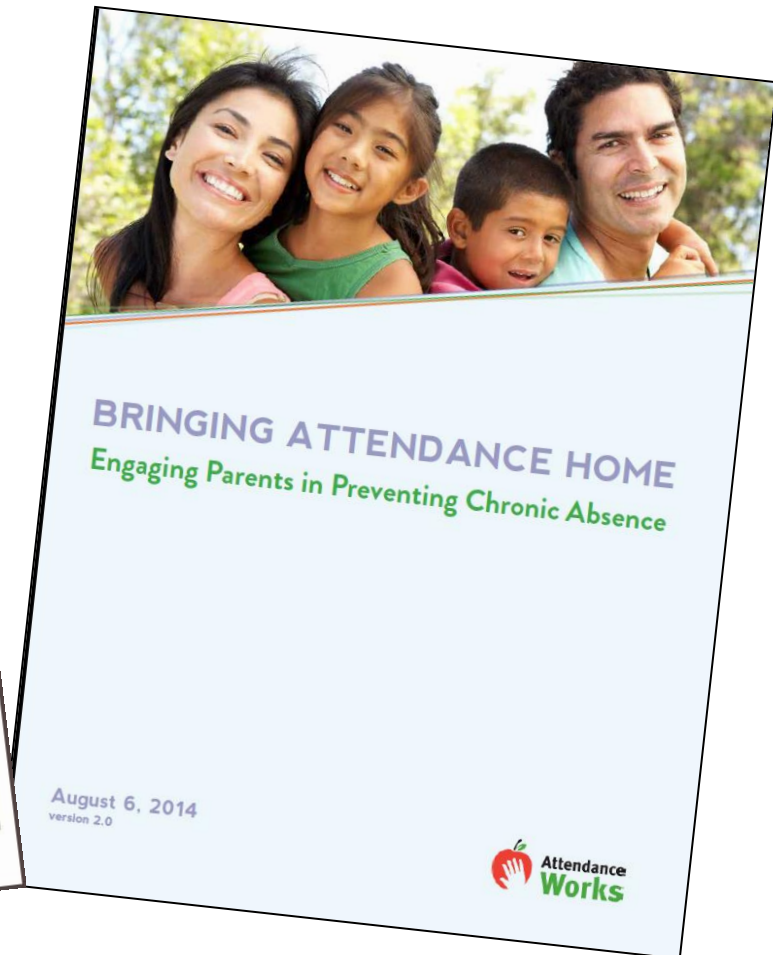
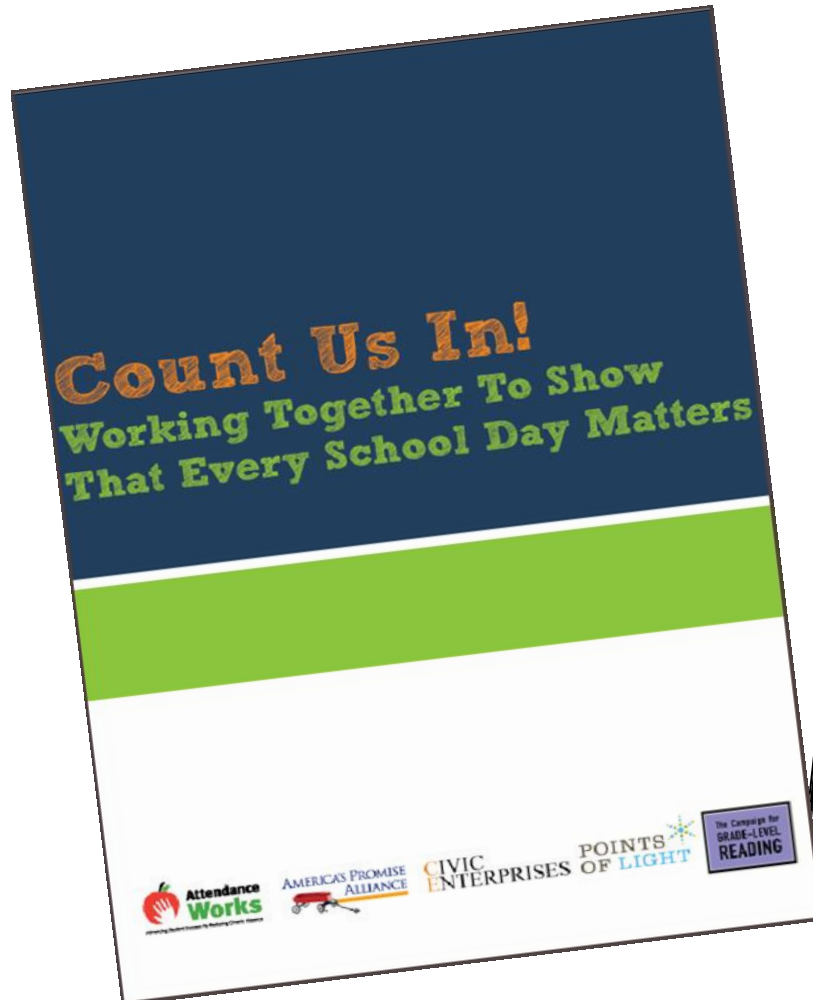
Nota: Números asumen un año escolar de 180 días

Para más información sobre cómo preparar a su hijo para la escuela, visite attendanceworks.org y reachoutandread.org/esp



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Communication, Education, and Engagement Resources



Parent Video & Discussion Guide



- **SETTING THE STAGE**
- **VIDEO** (*6 minutes*)
- **FACILITATED CONVERSATION**
 - **THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHRONIC ABSENCE**
 - **HOW TO IMPROVE ABSENTEEISM**
 - FAMILY PRACTICE
 - INCREASE SOCIAL CAPITAL
 - IDENTIFY HOW SCHOOL CAN HELP
 - COMMUNITY SERVICES

Discussion: When and where might you use these materials with a family or a group?



Make Creating Back Up Plans a Norm: Student Attendance Success Plan

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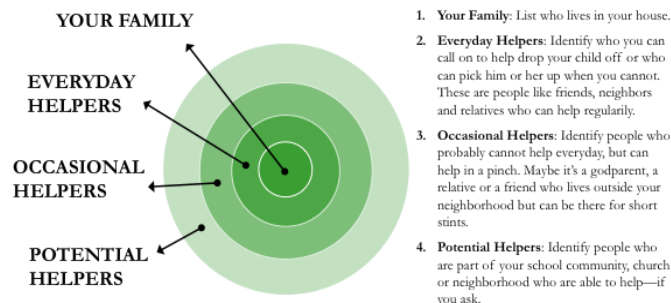


To learn more, please visit
www.attendanceworks.org or www.ar-qlr.net



Adapted with permission from materials created by Early Works at Early Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Ore. www.childtut.org/our-initiatives/early-works

YOUR FAMILY'S HELP BANK



1. Your Family:
2. Everyday Helpers:
3. Occasional Helpers:
4. Potential Helpers:

1. **Your Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help everyday, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

_____	_____
Name	Best Contact Number
_____	_____
Name	Best Contact Number
_____	_____
Name	Best Contact Number



To learn more, please visit www.attendanceworks.org
Adapted with permission of the DeVos Family Foundation



Join us for Attendance Awareness Month 2015!

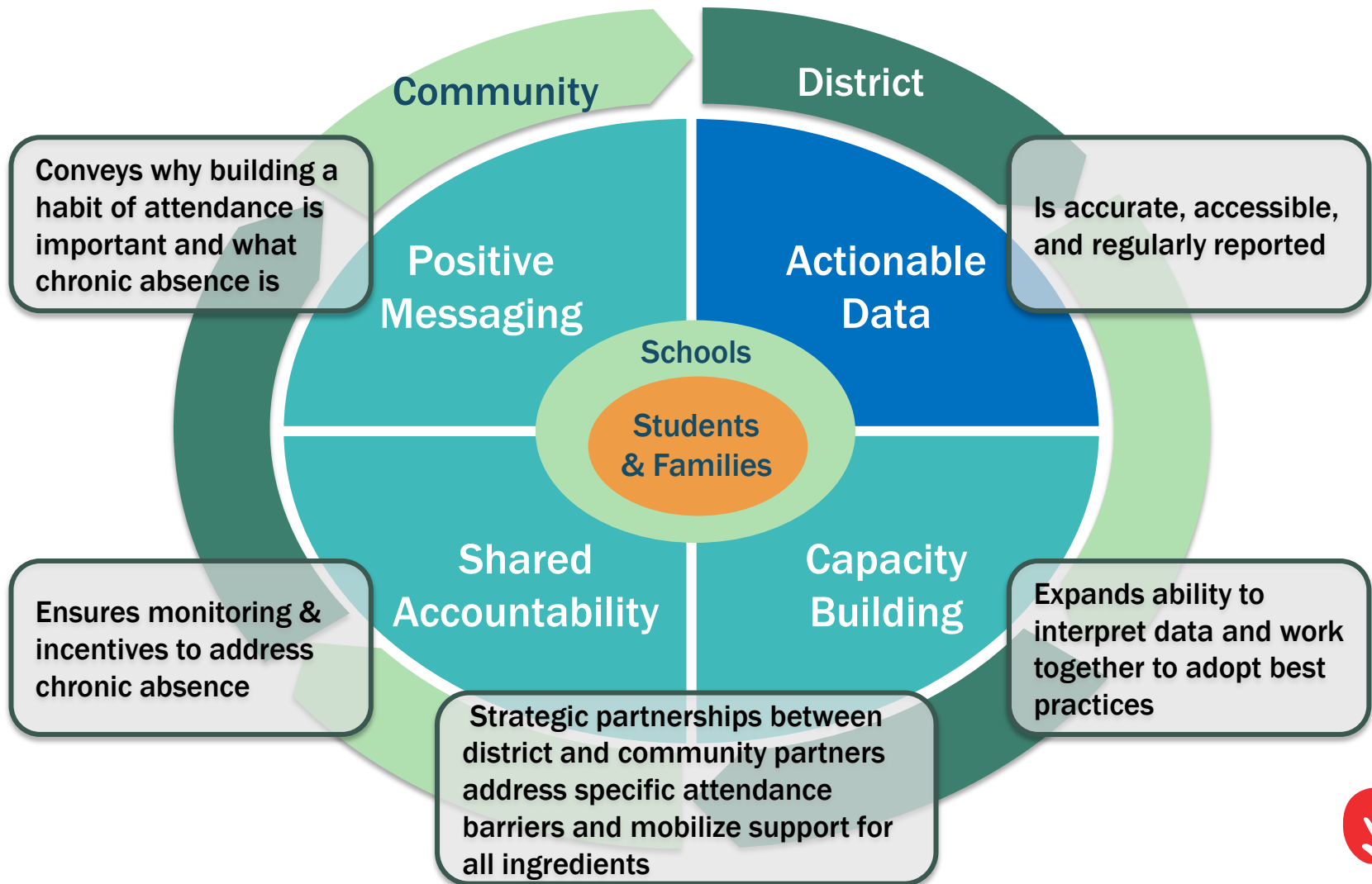


<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org>

**Proposed Theme for 2015:
MAP THE ATTENDANCE GAP**



Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



Instructions: Actionable Data

1. Find a partner
2. What do you notice when you look at the charts for Actionable Data?

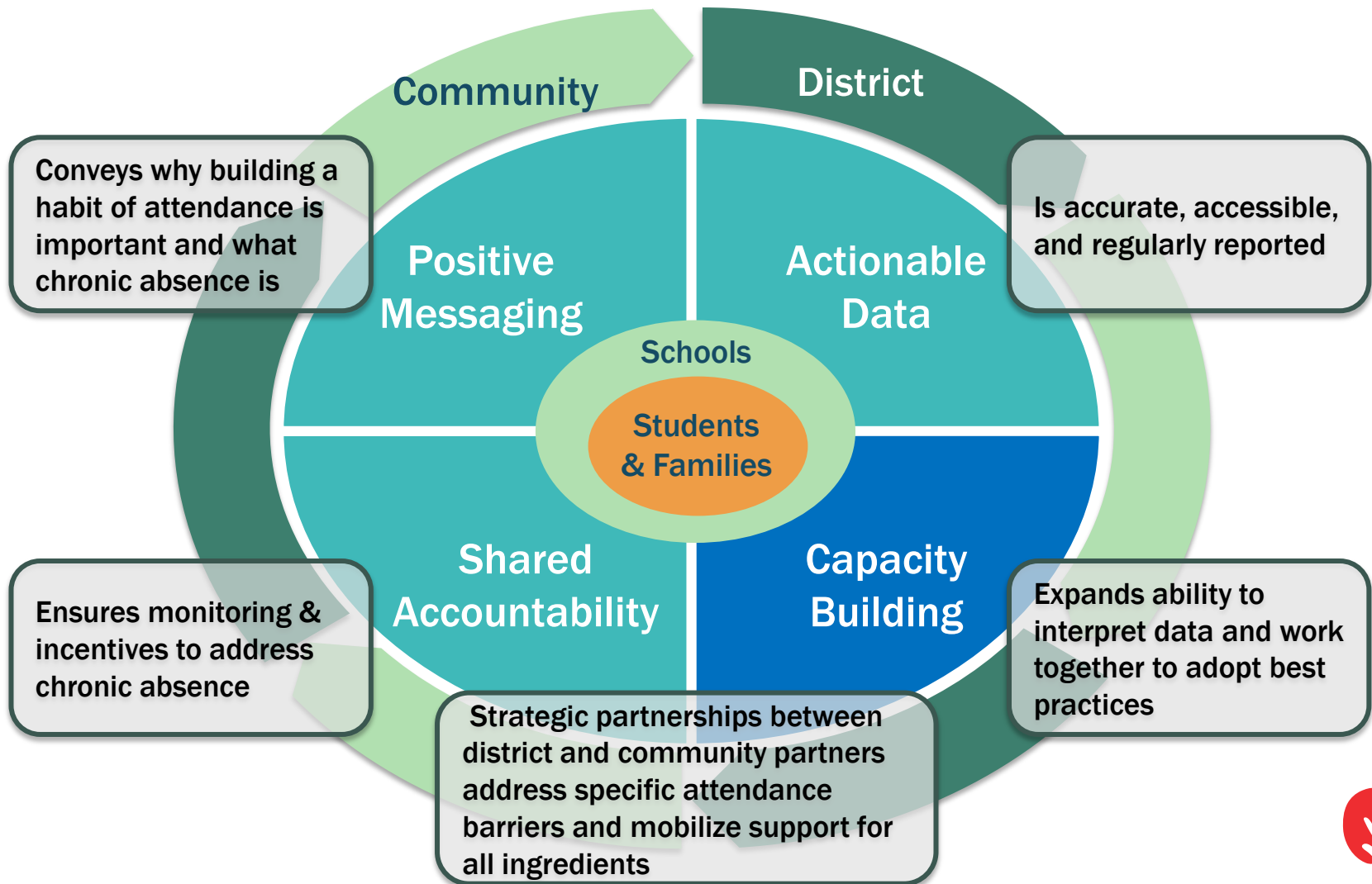
Where are areas of strength?

Where are major gaps?

Resources for Calculating Chronic Absence

- **Attendance Works: District and School Attendance Tracking Tools:**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/>
- **Other Districts** who have calculated chronic absence and use the same SIS system
- **Ask your vendors for help.**

Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



Instructions: **Building Capacity**

1. Find a partner
2. What do you notice when you look at the charts for **Building Capacity**?

Where are areas of strength?

Where are major gaps?

Principal Leadership: An Essential Ingredient

“While everyone can help ensure students show up to class every day, the leadership role that a principal plays is irreplaceable.”



Leading Attendance: A Toolkit for Principals

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/principals/>

Attendance Teams In Every School

Attendance Teams:

- Could be new or added to the responsibilities of an existing team, especially if you're already engaged in PBIS or RTI.
- Should include a Principal (or vice principal) and:
 - social worker, nurse, or counselor
 - attendance clerk
 - parent liaison
 - grade-level teacher lead
 - community-based organization/partner(s) offering support that engage students or parents or address an attendance barrier

(Tip: Consider designating a staff person to coordinate meetings, as well as to take notes)



Attendance Teams...

- **Should be action-oriented**
- **Use data to understand which sub-populations of students are most affected and what are the trends over time**
- **Identify and mobilize school and community resources to address identified needs**
- **Ensure needs of individual students with poor attendance are being addressed**

Attendance Teams best practices sources: Attendance Works, Children's Aid Society, the Children's Initiative, the Baltimore Education Research Consortium and the Baltimore Student Attendance Campaign



Tips on involving community partners

- a) As long as data is aggregated (e.g. total number of chronically absent students for the school or particular grades), community partners can see the data without consent.**
- b) Meetings can be organized so discussions about individual students only occur when partners who have consent are present.**
- c) Schools can build in obtaining consent into start of school registration.**

Map the need and available resources

TIER 3

How many students are missing 20% or more of current or prior year?

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

TIER 2

How many are missing 10-19%?

- Provide personalized early outreach
- Meet with student/family to develop plan
- Offer attendance Mentor/Buddy

TIER 1 How many are missing < 10% so this might be enough?

- Recognize good and improved attendance
- Educate & engage students and families
 - Monitor attendance data
- Clarify attendance expectations and goals
- Establish positive and engaging school climate

Filling in the information

DATA: Produce a list of students, calculate the absence rate by dividing # of days absent/total days of possible attendance. Count how many students are <10%; =>10 but <20%, >20%

RESOURCES: Draw a pyramid. Invite team members to use:

- * green stickies to fill in an existing resource
- * yellow to fill in resources that could be leveraged to address this tier of work.

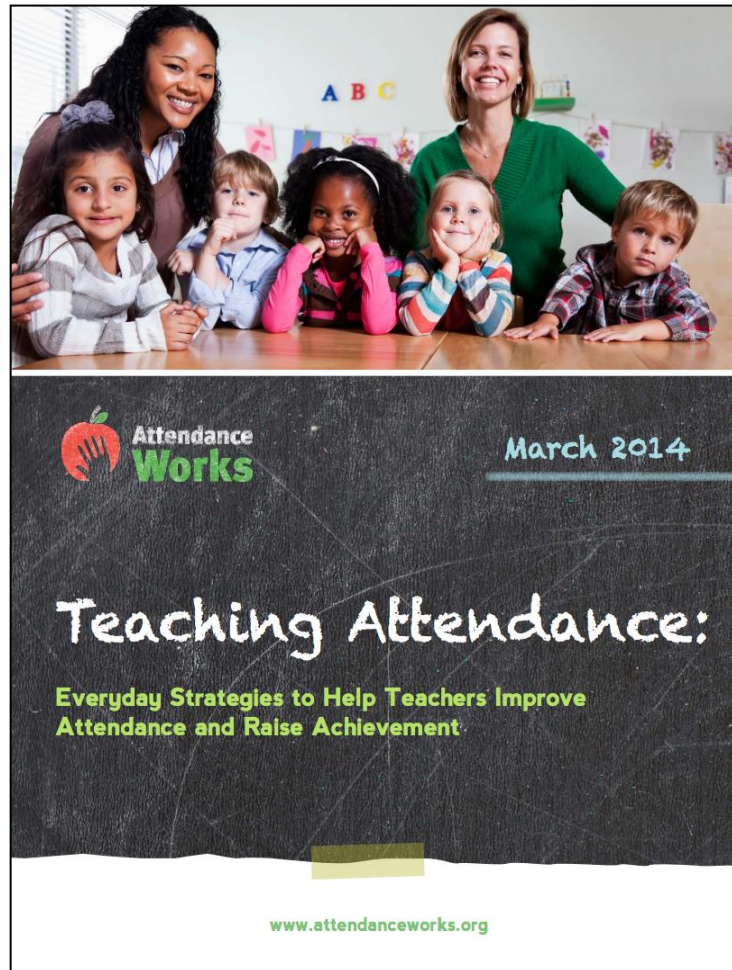


Examine the implications

Once the map is filled in, attendance team discusses:

- a) Where are the gaps?
- b) What resources could we easily leverage to address gaps, especially for tier 1 and 2?
- c) What are implications for who we need as partners?
And how we engage teachers and build capacity?
- d) What are our highest priority next steps?
- e) Consider presenting results to the school staff for feedback.

Teachers: The First Line of Prevention



Tailoring the Conversation to Students' Situations

Satisfactory Attendance

Congratulate parents on making attendance a priority and encourage them to keep it up. Ask them what they're doing that's enabling them to be so successful.

At-Risk

Let parents know that you are concerned about attendance because their child is beginning to head off track, and it is easy for absences to add up.

Chronic Absence

If student is right around 10% or a little above

Let parents know their child may be academically at risk because they have missed so much school. Discuss underlying causes and how you can help.

If student is severely chronically absent (e.g. >20%)

The type of challenges these families face may differ from those with more moderate absence problems. Be prepared to touch on difficult topics, be supportive, and be ready to connect to community resources.

Sample Scenario: Aaron

Aaron has missed 12 days of school in the past semester. He missed an entire week of school in November. So did his 3 siblings. Aaron is also frequently late to school. When his teacher asked him if he was sick, he said no — his parents decided to leave for vacation a little early before school let out so they could have more time visiting his grandparents. Aaron is looking forward to Christmas and has confided that the family will be leaving before school is out.

Framing the Conversation to Build a Relationship of Trust

1

Learn

Learn about the student's family and their experience in your school or classroom. Ask how the school year is going socially and academically. Find out about hopes and dreams.

2

Share

Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development, including helping put students on a pathway to success by encouraging a habit of good attendance.

3

Inform

Review attendance report with parents. Tailor your conversation to student's level of absenteeism and inform parents of possible impacts of missing school. Connect attendance back to parents' hopes and dreams for their child.

4

Discuss

Discuss the challenges parents face in getting their children to school, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, try to understand the barriers that are keeping their children from school.

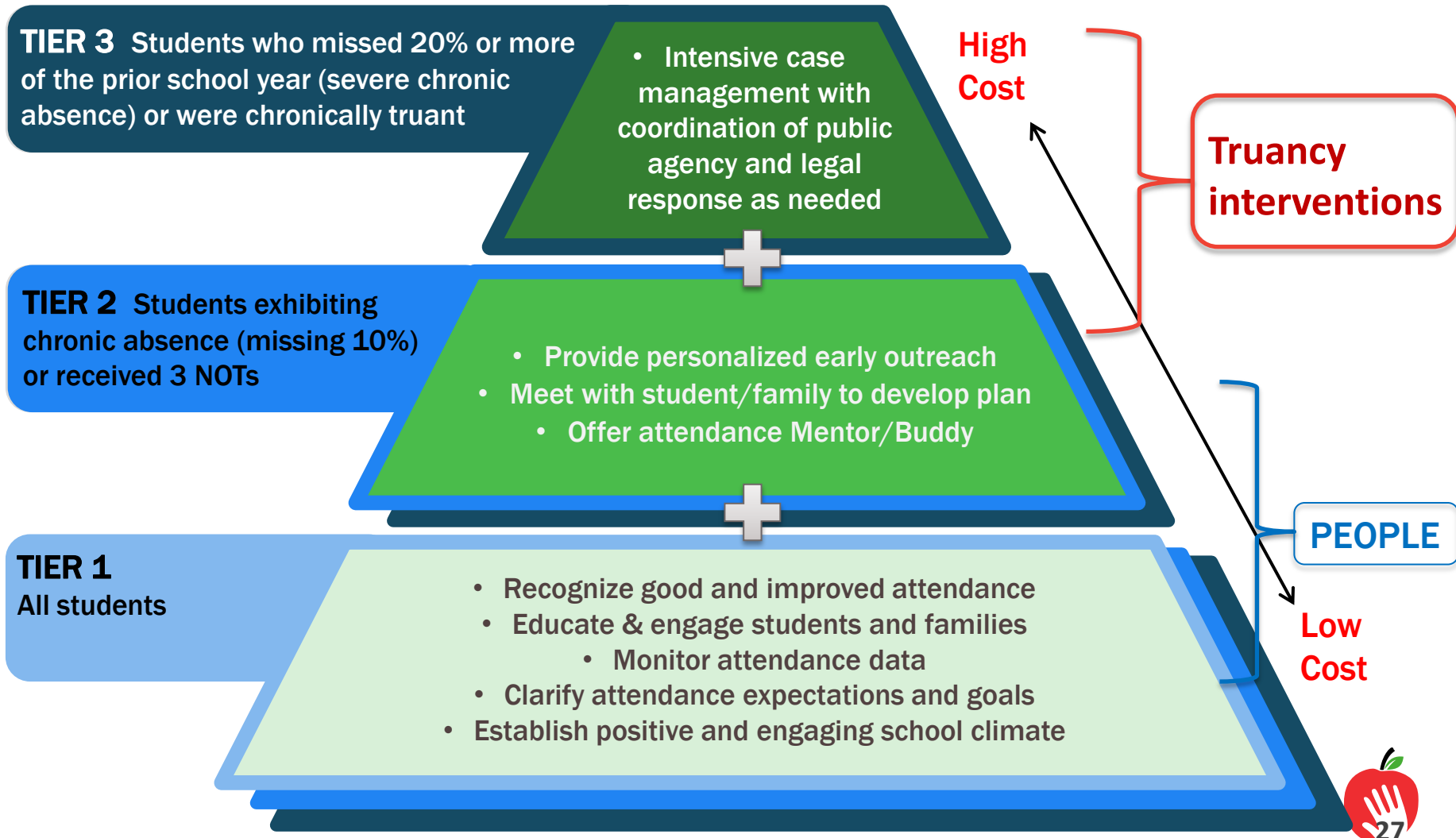
5

Arrive at a Plan

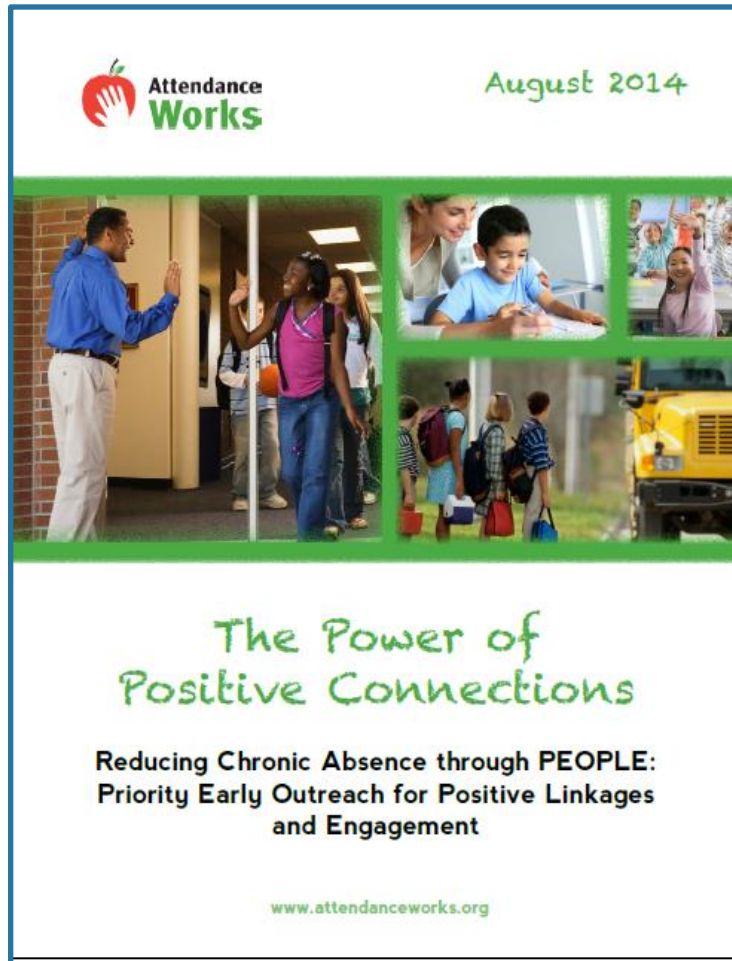
Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences and help them develop an attendance improvement plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you can help.



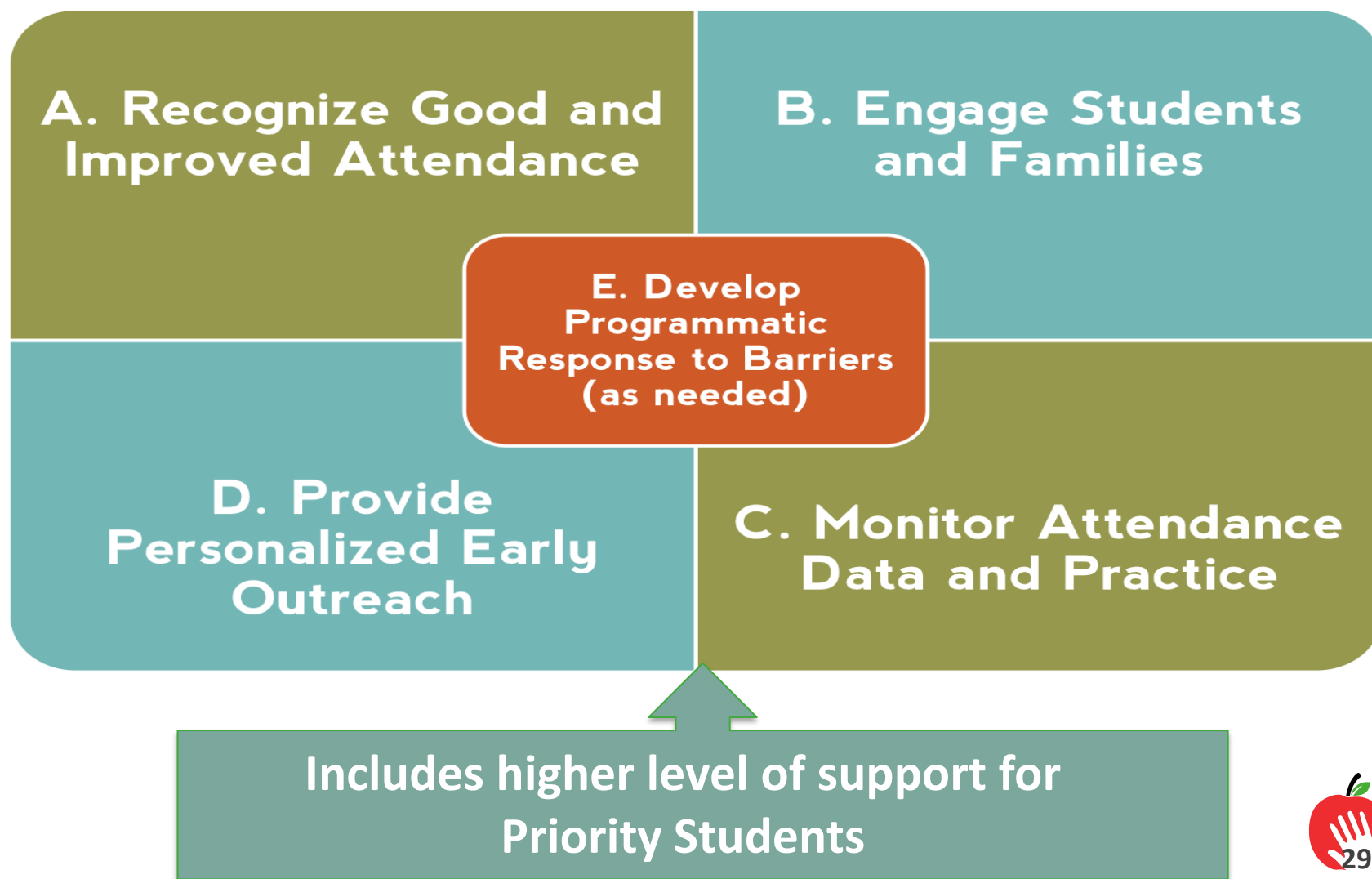
Improving Attendance Requires a Multi-Tiered Approach



The Power of Positive Connections



AW Recommended Site-Level Strategies



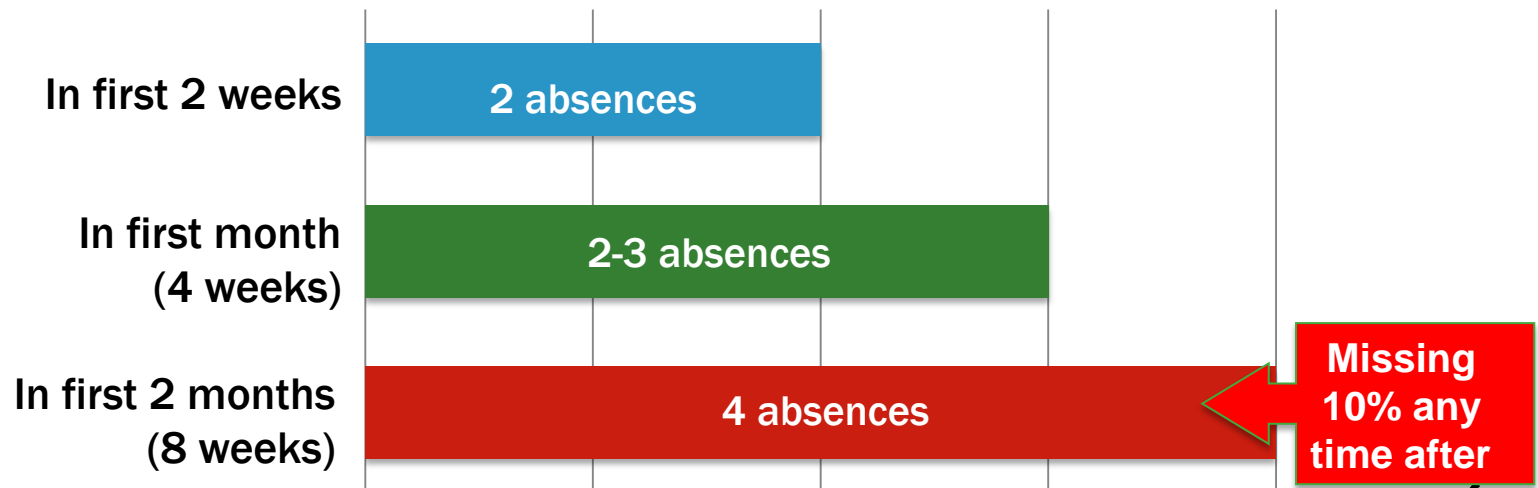
Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement (PEOPLE)

- **Priority:** Focuses on at-risk students in grades, schools and neighborhoods with high levels of chronic absence
- **Early:** Begins with the start of school.
- **Outreach:** Connects to students and families
- **Positive:** Promotes preventive, supportive approaches rather than punitive responses
- **Linkages:** Taps the full community for support
- **Engagement:** Motivates showing up to class & offers students & families a role in improving attendance.



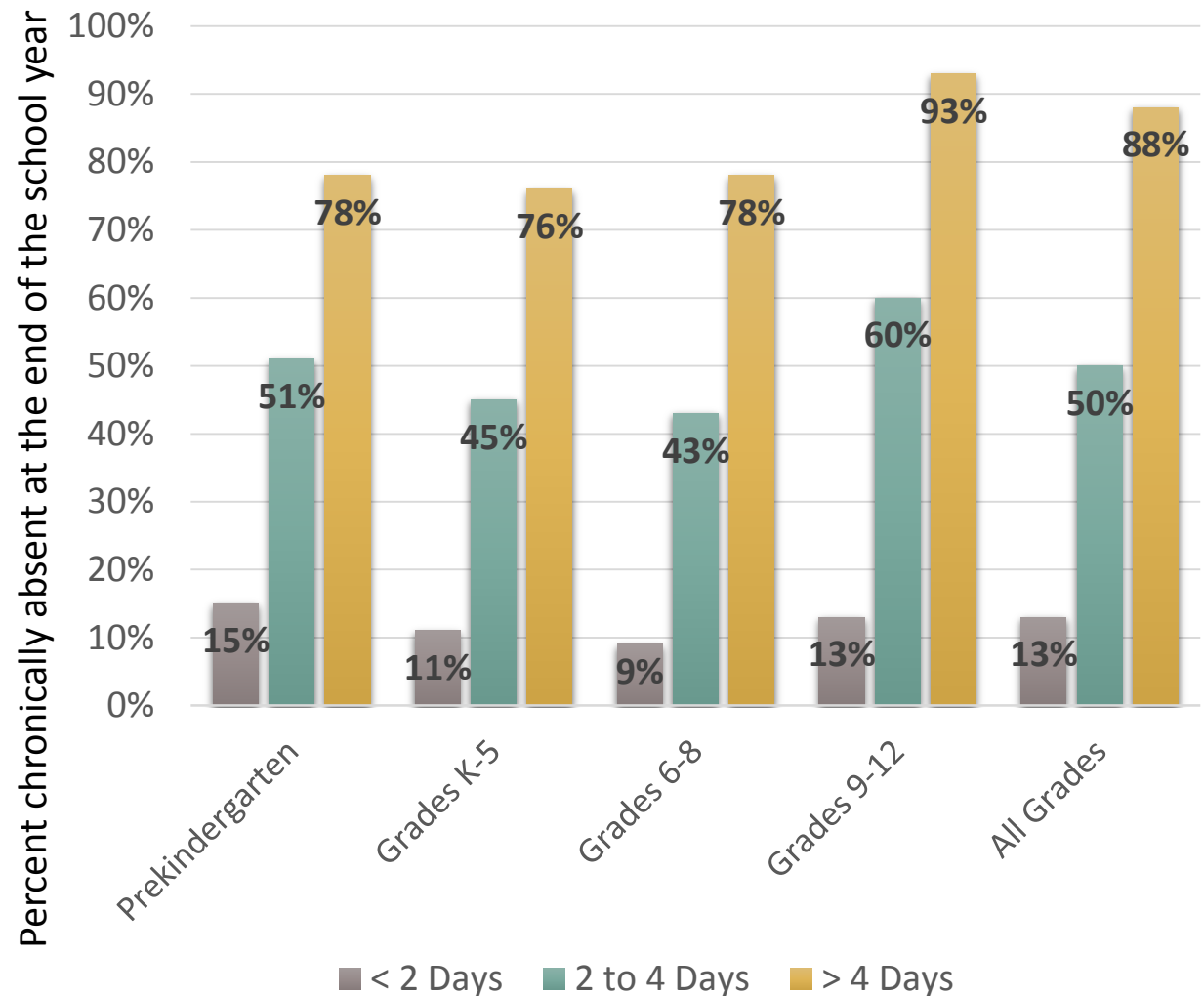
Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

- ❑ 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:

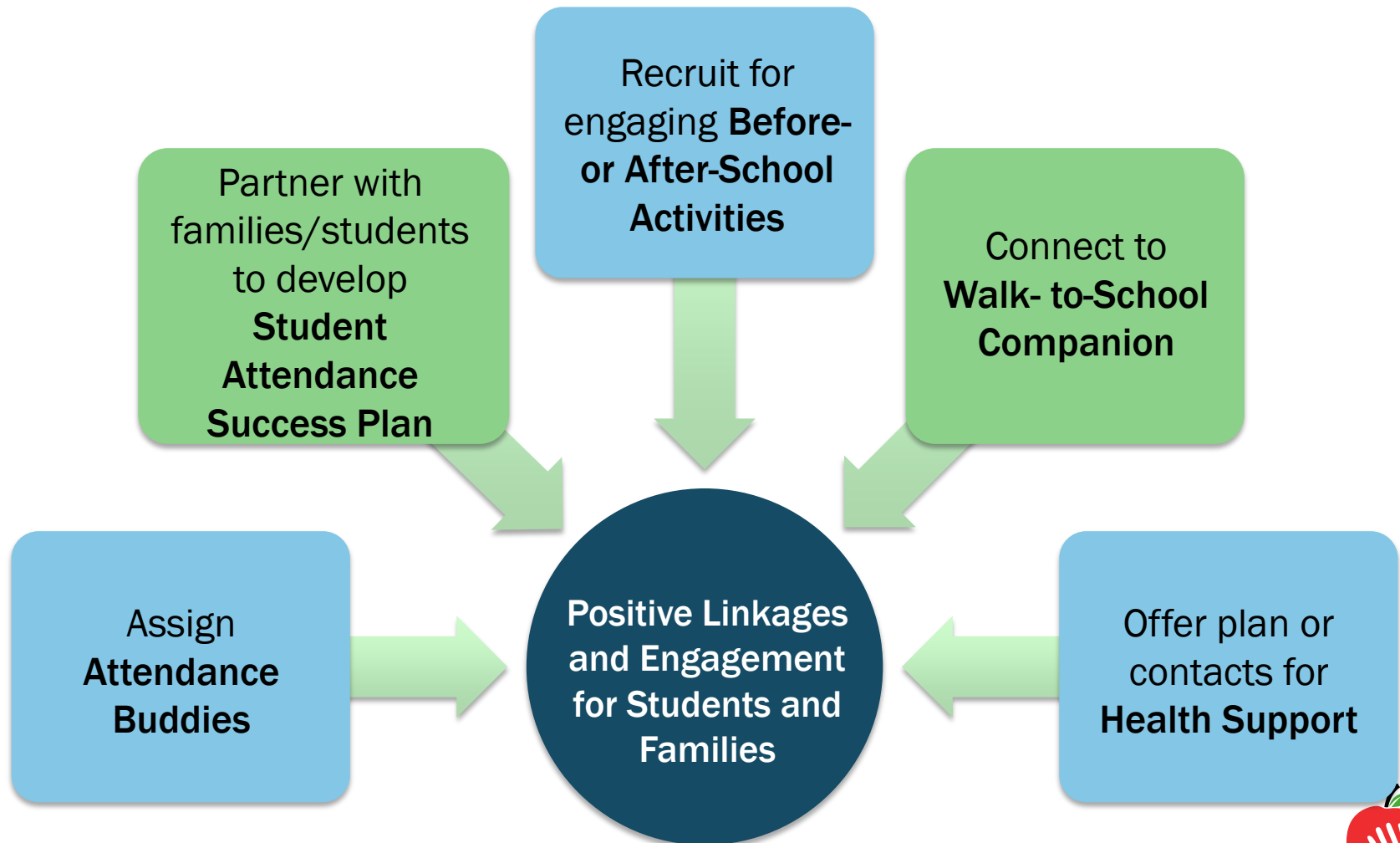


Students Who Miss 2 or More Days of School in the First Month of School Are Significantly More Likely to Be Chronically Absent by the End of the School Year

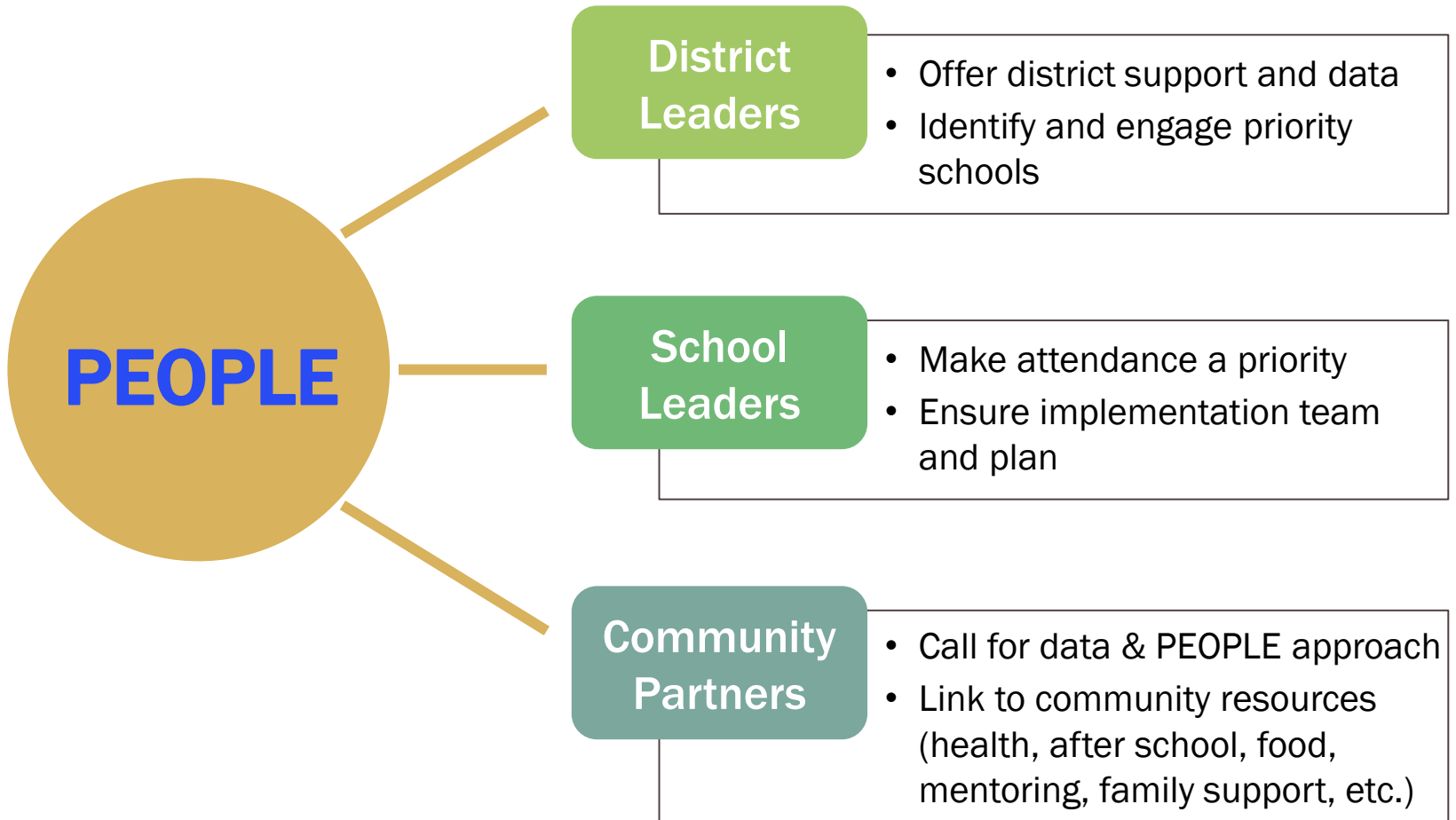
- Baltimore students who missed 2-4 days of school in September were 5 times as likely to be chronically absent.
- Students who missed 5 or more days of school in September were 16 times as likely to be chronically absent.



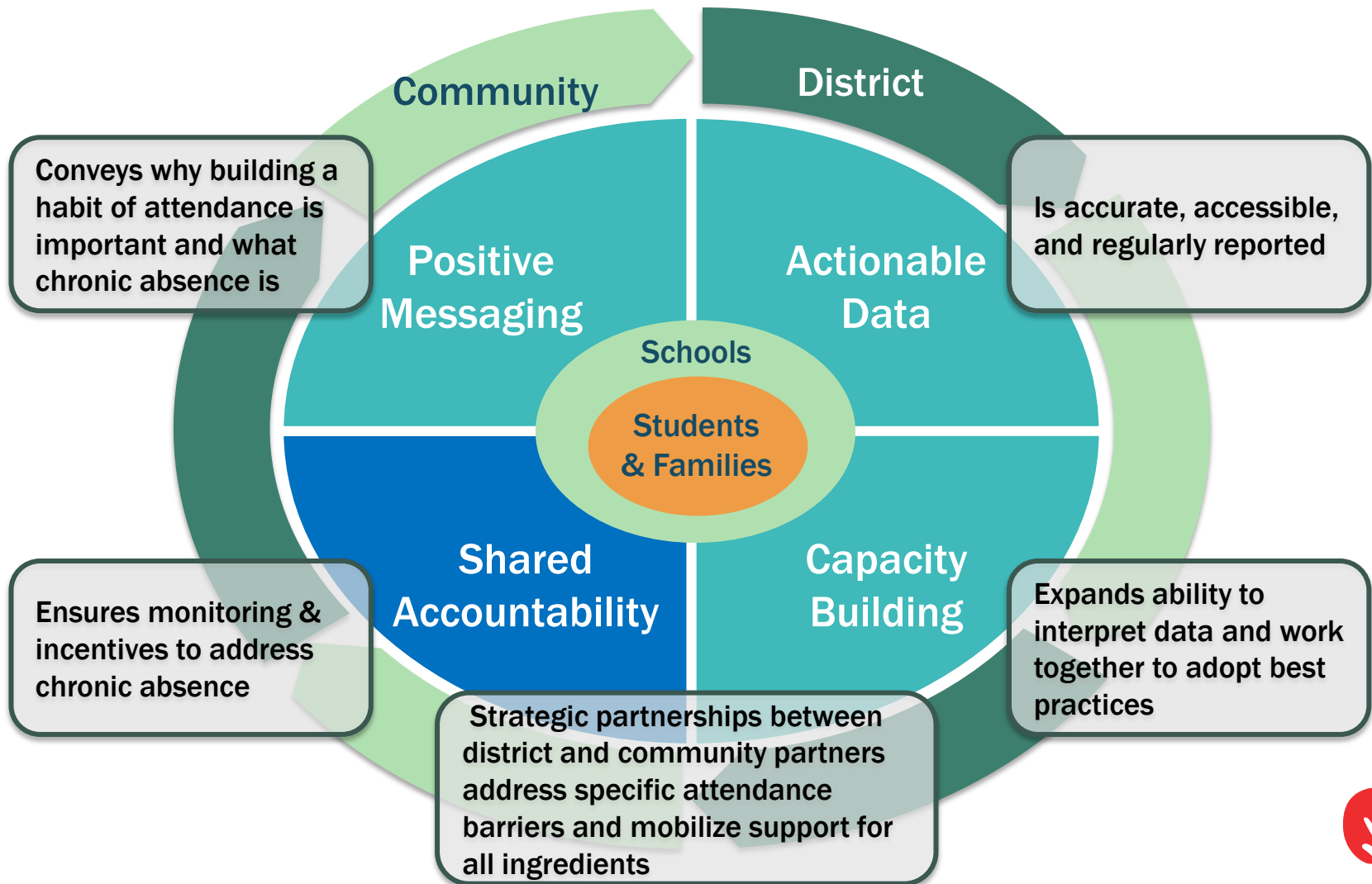
Possible Tier 2 Interventions



Who Can Help Advance a **PEOPLE** Approach?



Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



Instructions: **Shared Accountability**

1. Find a partner
2. What do you notice when you look at the charts for **Shared Accountability**?

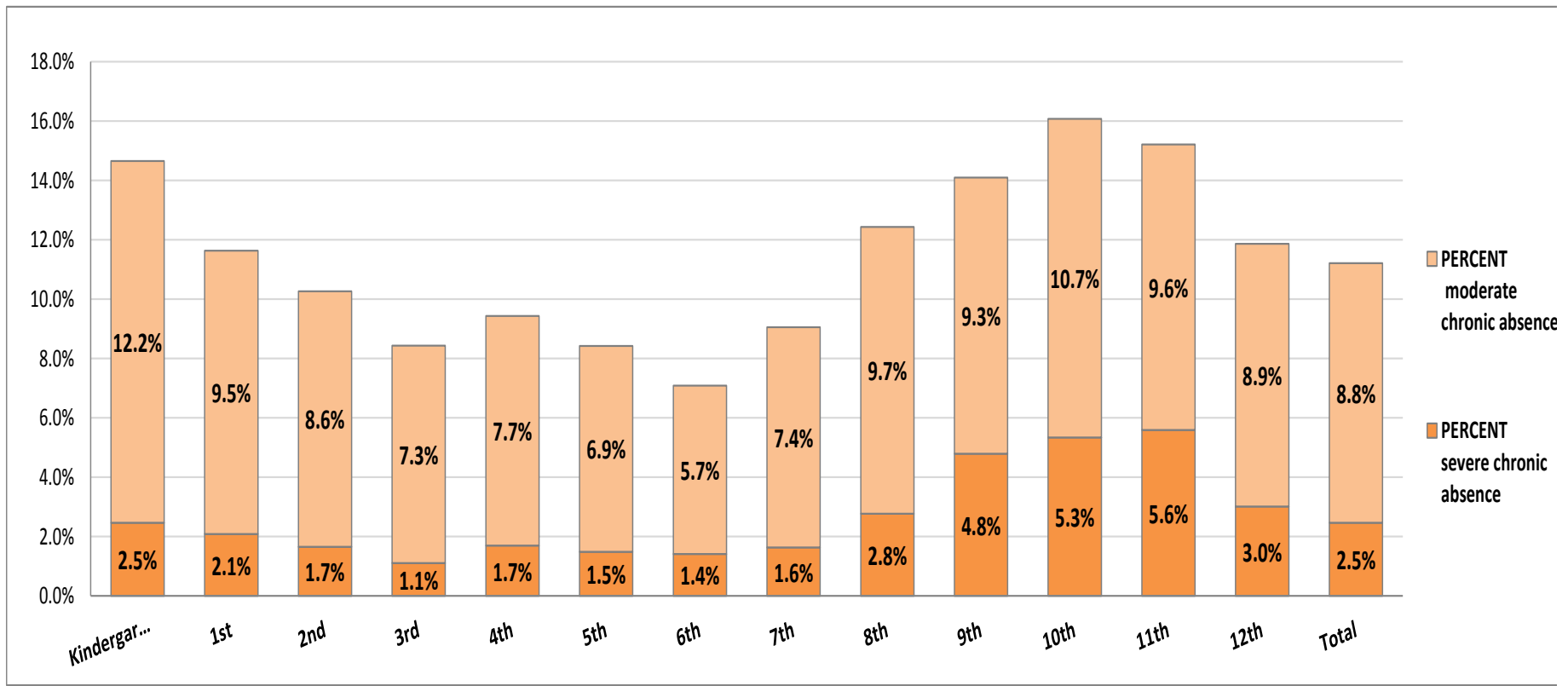
Where are areas of strength?

Where are major gaps?

Use data to determine where to focus:

A Typical District's Chronic Absence Data by Grade

What percentage of students in each grade level were MODERATELY or SEVERELY chronically absent?



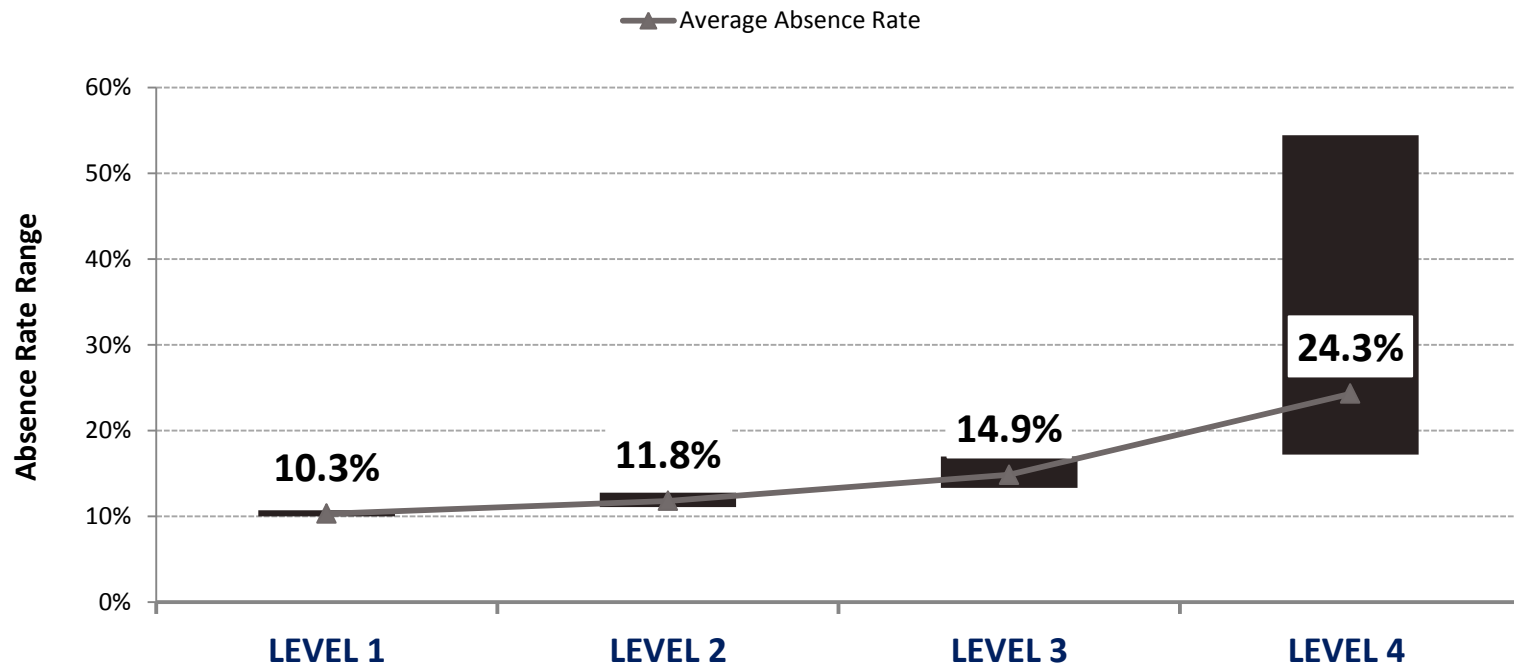
Use variation across schools to identify who needs support

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

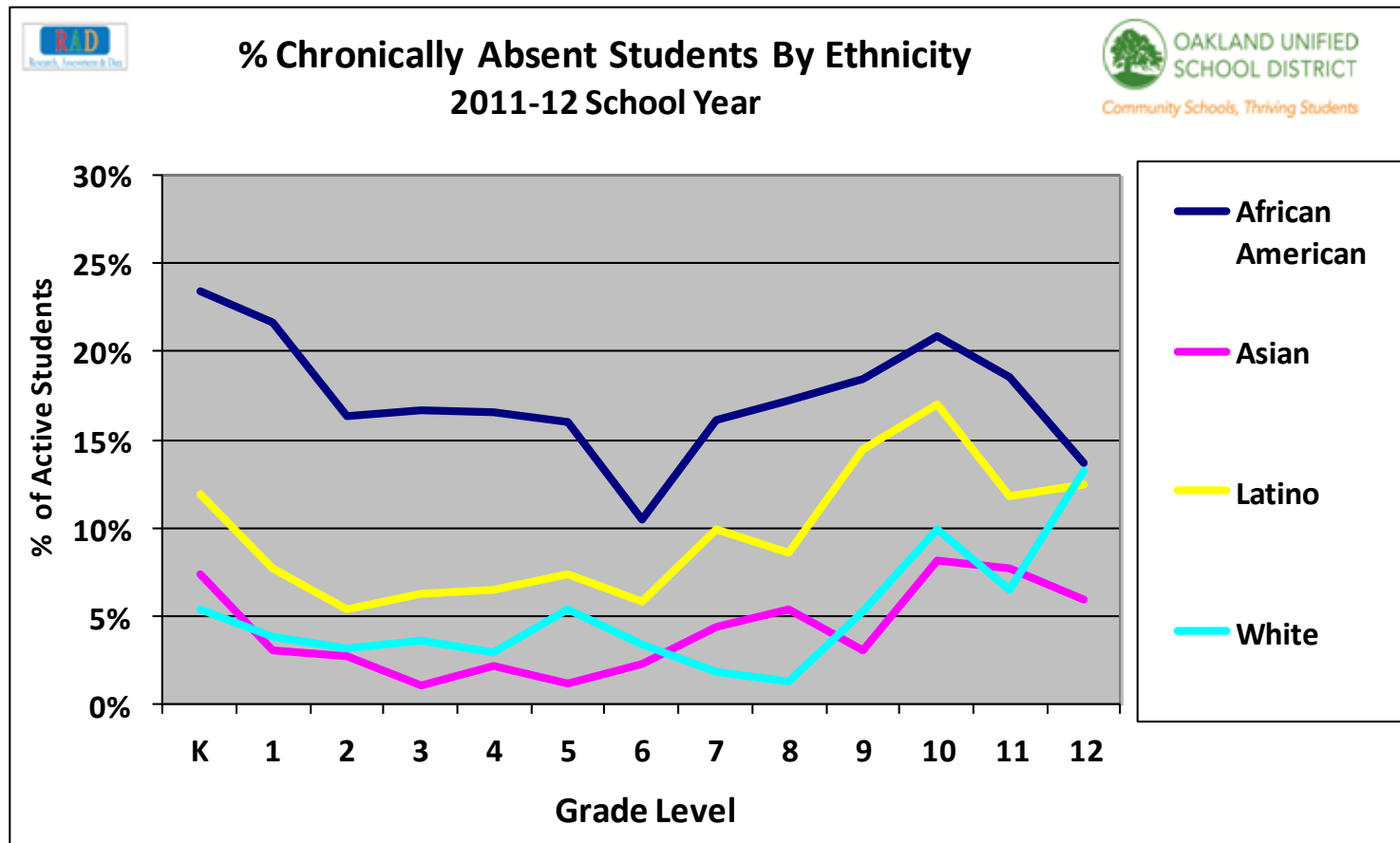
	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic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

Use data to target and align community resources

This analysis divides all chronically absent 1st graders in Oakland Unified district into 4 tiers (almost quartiles) based upon their level of absence



Close the achievement gap by mapping the attendance gap



Possible Next Steps

- 1) **Bring together key stakeholders** to form a district level attendance team
- 2) **Collect and review** your baseline data on chronic absence
- 3) **Carry out this self-assessment as a group** and identify next steps given strengths and challenges.
- 4) **Determine when and how often** this group will meet to ensure continued progress.



Tips for Moving Forward

- Improving attendance happens over time, with constant care and attention
- Reducing chronic absence requires operating at the level of the system and the individual.
- Draw upon data and passion.
- Look into your heart and find the story that will keep you inspired, energized and motivated.

Holding Ourselves Accountable

**Turn to the person next to you,
and tell him/her...**

- 1. What is one action you will take as a result of what you've heard today?**
- 2. Is there a story that keeps you inspired?**

