Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
With School Climate and SEL
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Outreach Director
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Join the discussion
#SELwebinar
What we’ll discuss today

- What is chronic absenteeism and what does the research say?
- How do SEL and school climate relate to chronic absence?
- What are districts doing to reduce absenteeism and promote SEL and school climate?
- What’s next for reducing chronic absence in the years ahead?
- Questions & answers
Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Mara Schanfield
Technical Assistance Consultant
Chad Carpenter
Assistant Superintendent

OGDEN
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Mel Atkins
Executive Director of Community & Student Affairs
Chronic absence is different from truancy (unexcused absences only) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A

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

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

Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12
Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Number of students missing 10% versus 10 unexcused absences (San Francisco Unified School District)

- # chronic absentees - 2010-2011
- # of students with 10 unexcused absences (as of May 16th 2011)
Student Attendance is Strongly Associated with Academic Success

K-1st Grade: Students who attend regularly in the early grades perform better on measures of academic and social and emotional capacities.

3rd Grade: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.

Middle School Success: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to have passing grades in middle school.

High School Completion: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate from high school.

College Completion: Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to persist in college and graduate.

Chronic Absence = Warning Sign of Academic Risk
Reducing Chronic Absence Can Help Close Equity Gaps

• Vulnerable children, especially those living in poverty, are 2-3 times more likely to experience chronic absence at earlier ages, starting as early as preschool.

• Vulnerable children are much less likely to have the resources to make up for lost learning time in the classroom.

• Vulnerable children are more likely to experience multiple years of chronic absence
36 states + DC adopted chronic absence as a metric in their ESSA plans. The vast majority adopted the definition recommended by Attendance Works.

Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act
FutureEd, Georgetown University, September 2017.
Reducing Chronic Absence Requires New Paradigm on Attendance

**Truancy**
- Counts unexcused absences
- Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- Uses legal, typically more punitive, solutions

**Chronic Absence**
- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive problem-solving, trauma-informed strategies
**Key Ingredients of Change**

**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.

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

**Shared Accountability:** Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.

**Strategic partnerships**
between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.

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**District**

**Community**

**Schools**

**Students & Families**
Chronic Absence affects some schools more than others.

Chart 2 - Distribution of Chronic Absence Levels Across Schools

- Extreme Chronic Absence (30%+): 9% (SY 13-14), 11% (SY 15-16)
- High Chronic Absence (20-29.9%): 11% (SY 13-14), 13% (SY 15-16)
- Significant Chronic Absence (10-19.9%): 31% (SY 13-14), 34% (SY 15-16)
- Modest Chronic Absence (5-9.9%): 24% (SY 13-14), 22% (SY 15-16)
- Low Chronic Absence (0-4.9%): 25% (SY 13-14), 20% (SY 15-16)
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional investment is needed in Tier I and the Conditions for Learning.
Leverage our Teaching Attendance Modules to Learn about A Tiered Approach

For free access, register here:

http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/teaching-attendance-curriculum/
The Challenge

Chronic absence
Teacher attrition

Increased student engagement
Reduction of chronic absence
Improved attendance
Teacher retention
### Factors that Contribute to Chronic Absence

#### External

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor transportation
- Frequent moves or school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Misconceptions: absences only seen as a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn’t affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren’t a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

(Attendance Works, 2018; Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)
Factors that Contribute to Chronic Absence

**Internal**

- Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes
- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Negative attitudes of parents because of their own school experience
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

Attendance Works (2018); Schanfield, Chang & Osher (in press)
Internal Conditions for Learning Affect Student Engagement and Attendance.

- Safety
- Connectedness & Support
- Challenging & Relevant Instruction
- Educator Social-Emotional Competency

Osher & Kendziora (2010)
Conditions for Learning mediate the influence of external factors affecting attendance and chronic absence.

Internal Factors
- Chronic absence
- Teacher attrition

External Factors
- Increased student engagement
- Reduction of chronic absence
- Improved attendance
- Teacher retention

Educator Capacity: *Skill x Will x Support*

(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)
Conditions for Learning mediate the influence of external factors affecting attendance and chronic absence.

External Factors

Disengaging Conditions for Learning

Chronic absence
Teacher attrition

Engaging Conditions for Learning

Increased student engagement
Reduction of chronic absence
Improved attendance
Teacher retention

Educator Capacity:
Skill x Will x Support

(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)
Educator capacity to create engaging conditions for learning is the difference between school conditions that *promote engagement* and those that *promote disengagement*.

(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)
Key Messages for Improving Attendance

Attendance is often a reflection of the conditions for learning within a school.

If engaging school conditions are consistently present, due to educators with will, skill, and support, then student attendance and engagement will increase.

Educators who invite student and family input, and understand a community’s context (i.e. internal and external factors), can identify what needs to change in school to reduce chronic absence.

Improving student attendance requires educators to prevent and intervene.

(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)
ABOUT THE DISTRICT
GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

7TH LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN MICHIGAN WITH 54 SCHOOLS
• Nearly 17,000 students
• 80% free/reduced lunch
• 20% special education
• 25% English language learners
• 33% African American
  37% Hispanic
  22% Caucasian

3RD LARGEST EMPLOYER IN GRAND RAPIDS
• 2,700+ employees (1,400 teachers)
2012-2013
CHRONIC ABSENCES

36.4% CHRONICALLY ABSENCE

GRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent Chronic Absence</th>
<th>Percent Severe Chronic Absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM OVER TIME

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS, BY LEVEL

NUMBER OF STUDENTS, BY LEVEL

© 2017 Grand Rapids Public Schools
1. District and Site Leadership
2. Community Partnership and Collective Impact
3. Data and Transparency
4. Parent Engagement and Actionable Messaging
5. Investment Over Time
MAPPING TARGET AREAS
PROGRESSION OF
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

THE PERCENT OF 7TH GRADE STUDENTS WITH A SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE LEVEL DECREASES EACH MARKING PERIOD, WHERE AS THE PERCENT IN EVERY OTHER LEVEL INCREASES.

7TH GRADE ATTENDANCE LEVELS BY MARKING PERIOD

Marking Period 1: Satisfactory 81%, At Risk 11%, Moderate 6%, Severe 2%
Marking Period 2: Satisfactory 79%, At Risk 12%, Moderate 6%, Severe 3%
Marking Period 3: Satisfactory 78%, At Risk 14%, Moderate 6%, Severe 4%
Marking Period 4: Satisfactory 67%, At Risk 17%, Moderate 10%, Severe 6%
Parent University is a community collaborative to help parents become full partners in their child’s education.

Parent University offers modules, activities, workshops, classes, conferences, mentoring, and coaching to equip parents for success.
ACTIONABLE MESSAGING

CHALLENGE

STRIVE FOR FEWER THAN FIVE DAYS

Source: Believe 2 Become

© 2016 Grand Rapids Public Schools
DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

NEW LEADER BOARDS

CHALLENGE 5 TOOLKIT
(For Schools & Community Partners)
- Yard signs
- Encouragement stickers
- Award ribbons
- Classroom attendance charts
- Home attendance charts
- No-cost recognition strategies
- Request today

STUDENT ART PARTNERSHIP
- GRPS Fine Arts Department leading
- Attendance posters

Source: Believe 2 Become
© 2016 Grand Rapids Public Schools
55% of students suspended at least one time in 5th grade were chronically absent in 7th grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>7th Grade Attendance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Suspensions</td>
<td>Satisfactory: 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+Suspensions</td>
<td>Satisfactory: 22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7th Grade Attendance Levels by 5th Grade Suspension Rates
63% of students suspended at least one time in 8th grade were chronically absent in 9th grade.
Our community is dedicated to educating the whole child. This includes focusing on social and emotional learning of students and adults by explicitly teaching and modeling the attitudes and skills necessary to:

- Recognize and manage their emotions
- Demonstrate caring and concern for others
- Establish positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Constructively handle challenging social situations

*Notice competencies are to be learned and practiced by adults as well*
About Ogden School District

- Serving 12,300 students across 20 schools
- 76% free/reduced lunch, 64% minority, 21% limited English proficiency, 24.4% of students are chronically absent
- 17 out of 20 schools have 10% or more families in intergenerational poverty
- High teen pregnancy and suicide rates; 46% report a need for mental health treatment; 17% report having seriously considered suicide
- Top 32 students referred in 9th grade year have a 43-50% dropout rate
Ogden School District will improve **K-12 Literacy Performance**

Ogden School District will increase **High School Graduation Rate**
Attendance Work Group

- MTSS framework for implementing systemic, evidence-based practices in 3-tiers
- District Implementation Team (DIT) help to ensure implementation capacity is developed at school sites
- Administrative representation from each school level (*elementary, junior high, high school and central office*)
- Counselor, teacher, and Information Technology (IT) representation
Tiered Attendance Checklist (TAC) Survey

- Proficiency with attendance laws
- Clear and consistent taxonomy (*terms and definitions*)
- Written policies and procedures
- Communication/media campaigns on attendance
- Partnering with families
- Community support for attendance
Goal-Setting for 2018-2019

- Taxonomy (Clear and Consistent)
- Take Attendance (Accurately)
- Awareness
Clear and Consistent Taxonomy

- Redesign our attendance codes *(Student Information System)*

- Align our common attendance language with our new Early Warning System *(Panorama)*

- Example: “At-Risk” and Chronic”
### Clear and Consistent Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panorama (previously)</th>
<th>Panorama (Now)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-Track for College &amp; Career</strong>&lt;br&gt;(0-4.99% days missed)</td>
<td><strong>Regular Attender</strong>&lt;br&gt;(0-4.99% days missed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-Track for Graduation</strong>&lt;br&gt;(5-9.99% days missed)</td>
<td><strong>At-Risk</strong>&lt;br&gt;(5-9.99% days missed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At-Risk</strong>&lt;br&gt;(10-19.99% days missed)</td>
<td><strong>Chronic</strong>&lt;br&gt;(10-19.99% days missed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical</strong>&lt;br&gt;(20% or more days missed)</td>
<td><strong>Severe</strong>&lt;br&gt;(20% or more days missed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clear and Consistent Taxonomy
Taking Attendance & Raising Awareness

• 2018-2019 is our baseline year

• Automated messages to teachers

• Trainings (administrators, secretaries, school board)

• Monthly Campaigns
  ✓ September - Attendance Awareness
  ✓ October - Every Student…Every Day
  ✓ Nov./Dec. - Healthy Routines

• Community Partners (e.g. incentives, local businesses, etc.)
Awareness - September Video
Digging Deeper with Panorama

Attendance
Are we hitting our attendance goal?  Our goal: 95% daily attendance

Yes!  96.2% on Thursday, October 4th daily attendance (3-day streak)  95.5% year to date average daily attendance

What is our daily attendance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1w</th>
<th>1m</th>
<th>3m</th>
<th>6m</th>
<th>YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who missed school on Thursday, October 4th?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Streak</th>
<th>YTD Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Excused</td>
<td>13 days</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unexcused Absent</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary
18 students absent
Reason
12 Unexcused Absent
6 Parent Excused
Self-Efficacy

Based on 69 responses

How much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes.

What are the results for this topic?

41%

responded favorably
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned in your classes?</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you that you will remember what you learned in your current classes, next year?</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you that you can learn all the material presented in your classes?</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When complicated ideas are presented in class, how confident are you that you can understand them?</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you that you can do the hardest work that is assigned in your classes?</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digging Deeper with Panorama

Playbook

What are strategies for improving Self-Efficacy?

- Asking for Help
  - inspirED

Self-Efficacy Toolkit
  - Transforming Education

Help Students Create Goal Setting Portfolios
  - Bonnie Nieves

See more on Playbook ➔

GOAL
Help students identify areas in their lives in which they could use support and construct an explicit request for support.

ACTION
1. Engage students in a conversation on the importance and difficulties of asking for help.
   a. How do you know when you need help?
   b. How do you know who to ask for help?
   c. What kinds of things do you typically ask for help on?

2. Explain that asking for help may be difficult, as we sometimes view it as a sign of weakness. But strategic requests for help are actually a sign of resourcefulness.

3. Explain that you want your classroom to be a space where students feel comfortable asking for help.

4. Ask students to identify a problem they could use help on right now, and someone who might be able to help.
“When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.”
What’s next for reducing chronic absence?
Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey

Free, open-source SEL survey from Panorama Education:

www.panoramaed.com/social-emotional-learning
Free guide for school and district leaders:

www.panoramaed.com/resources
Questions & Answers

Join the discussion

#SELwebinar
Thank you!

Questions?
info@panoramaed.com