



# Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

*With School Climate and SEL*



# Ben Mark

**Outreach Director**

*[www.panoramaed.com](http://www.panoramaed.com)*

**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*



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®



# Chad Carpenter

*Assistant Superintendent*





# Mel Atkins

*Executive Director of Community  
& Student Affairs*

**GRPS** 

The logo for GRPS (Grand Rapids Public Schools), featuring the letters "GRPS" in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font, followed by a stylized orange and yellow flame icon.

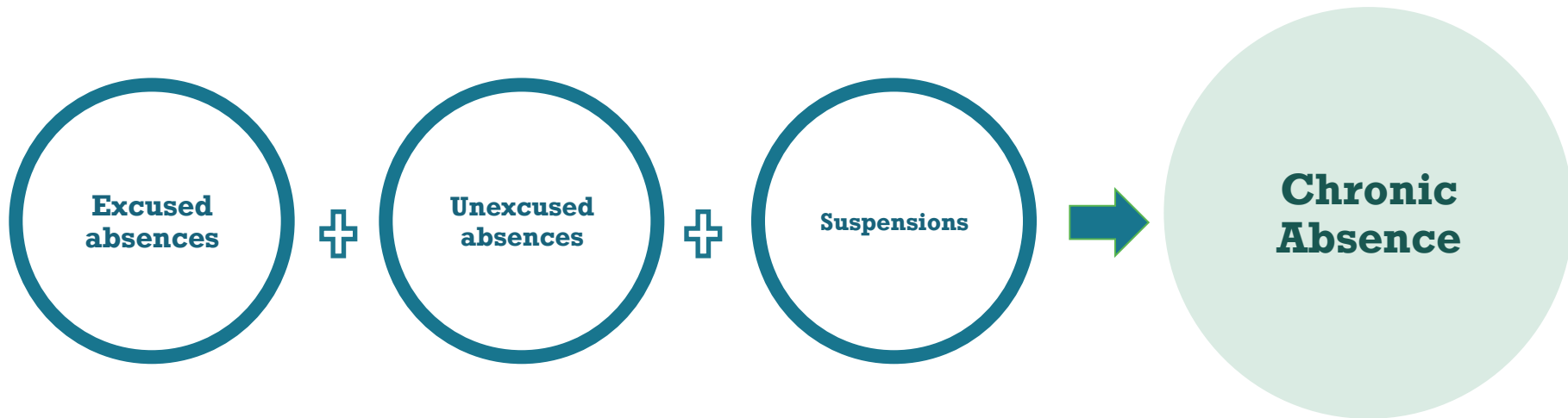






## What is Chronic Absence?

**Chronic absence** is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Attendance Works recommends defining it as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason.**



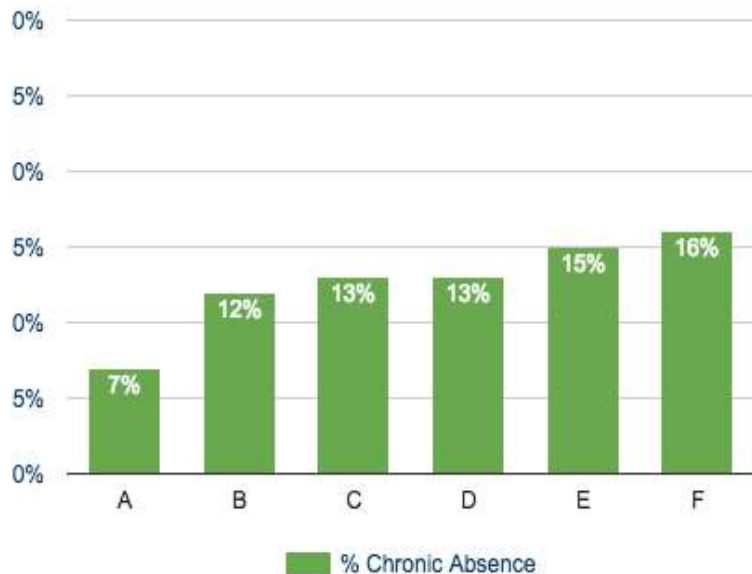
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



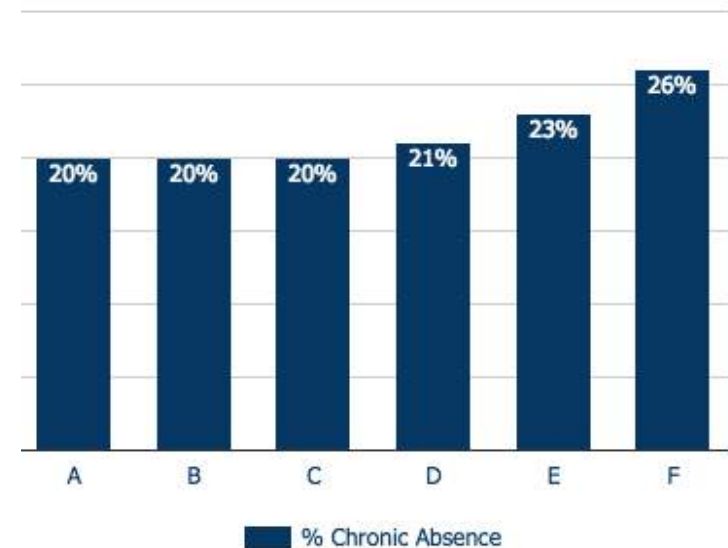
## Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

**90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A**

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



98% ADA = little chronic absence

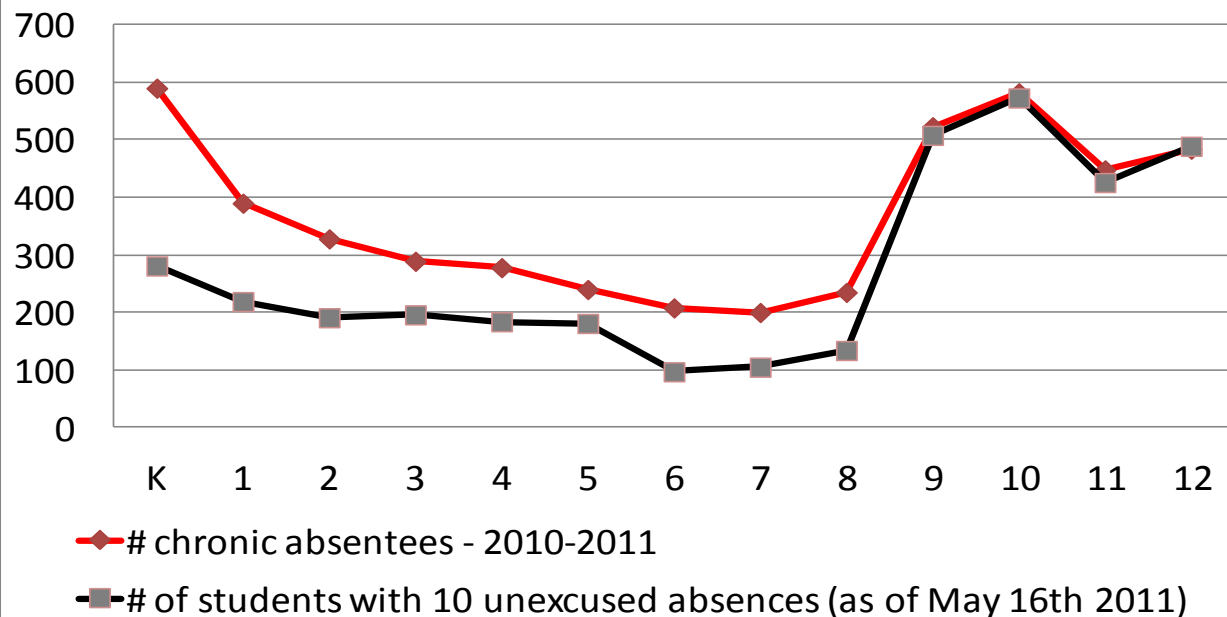
95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence



## Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

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





## Student Attendance is Strongly Associated with Academic Success

Chronic Absence = Warning Sign of Academic Risk

### K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade:

Students who attend regularly in the early grades perform better on measures of academic and social and emotional capacities.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be able to read proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### Middle School Success:

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to have passing grades in middle school

### High School Completion:

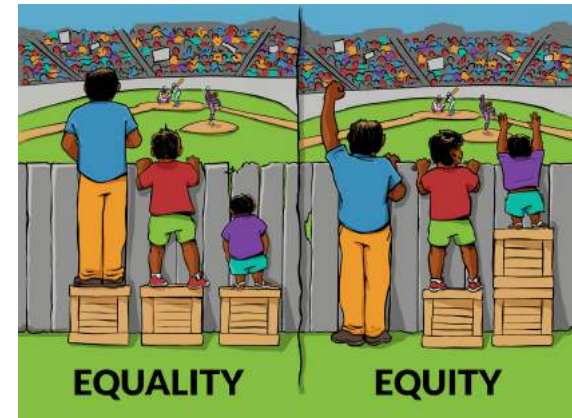
Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate from high school

### College Completion:

Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to persist in college and graduate

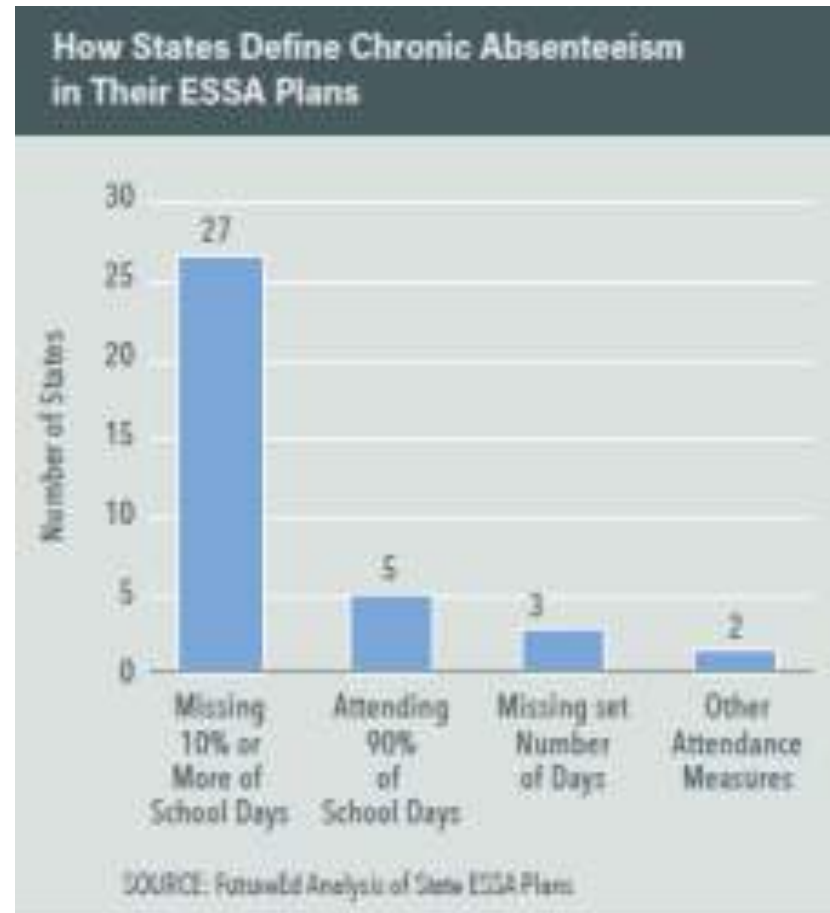
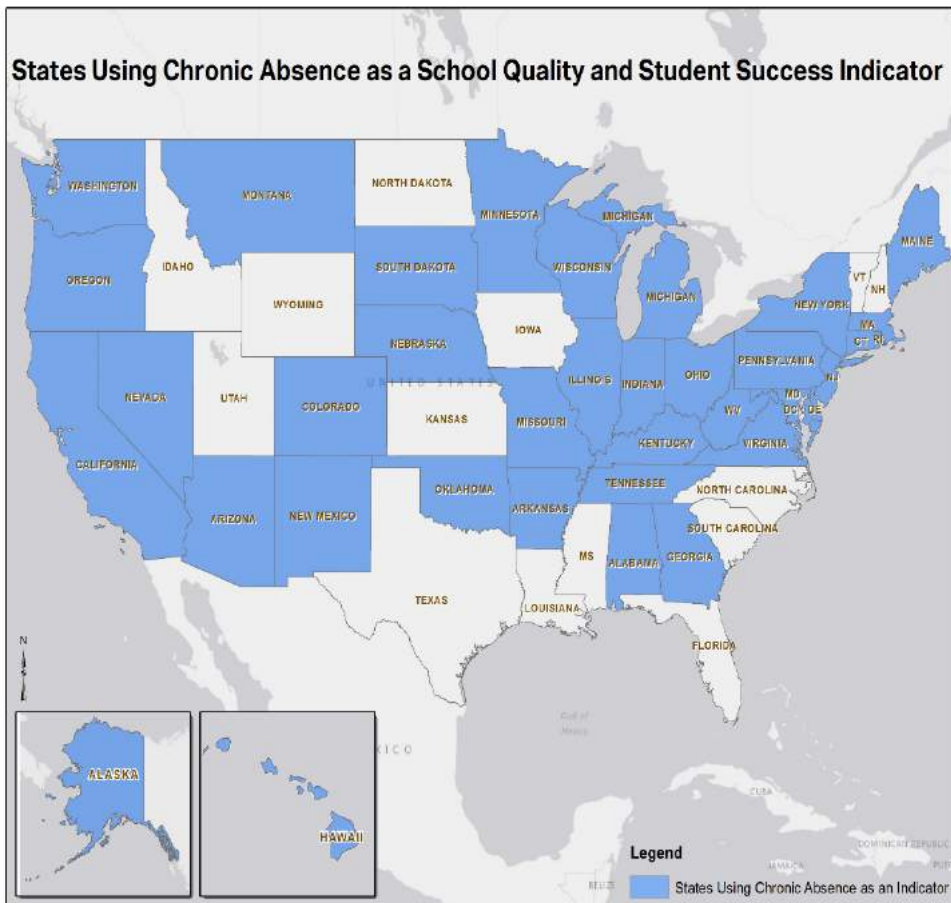


## Reducing Chronic Absence Can Help Close Equity Gaps



- 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

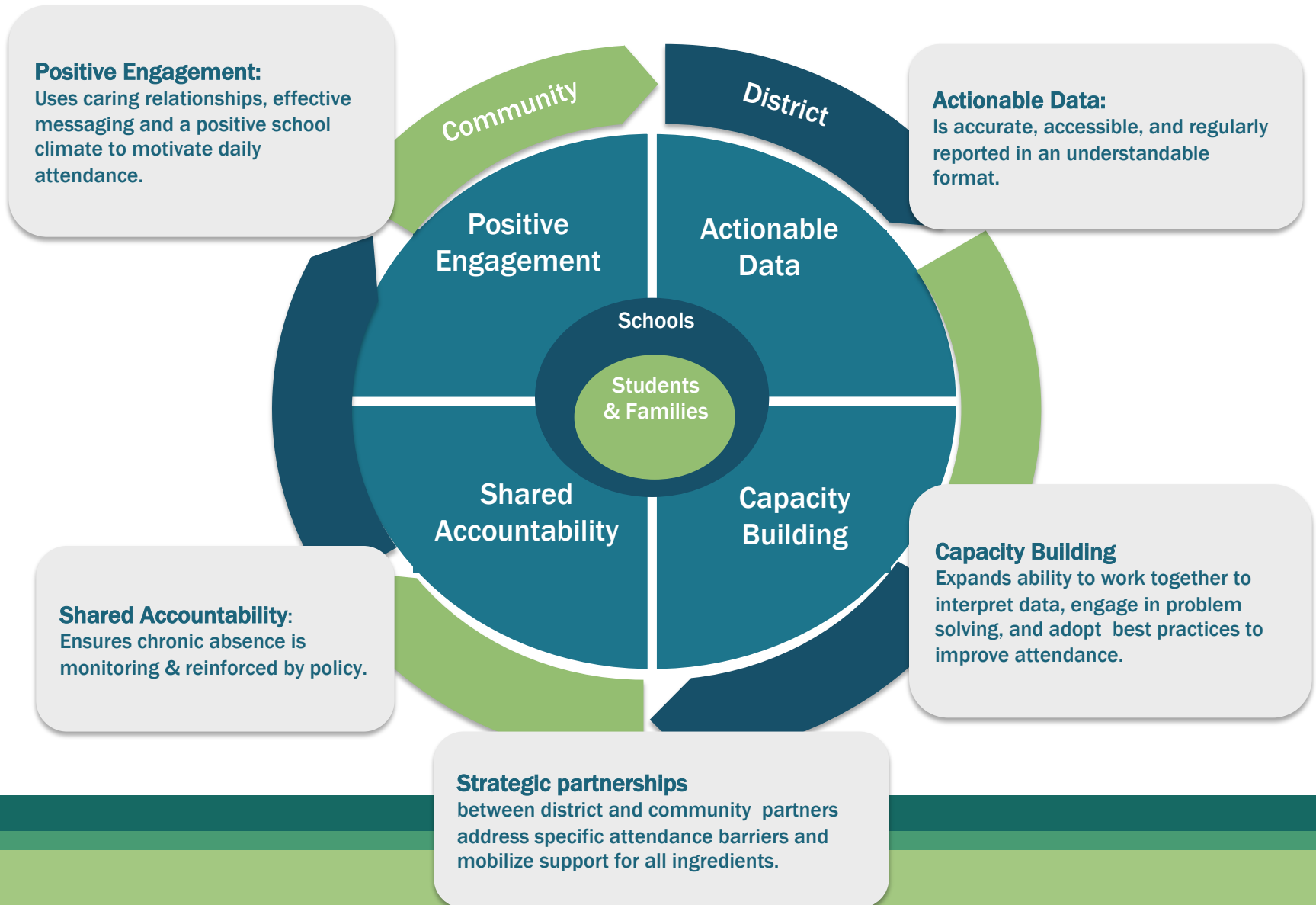
### Truancy

- 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







## Chronic Absence affects some schools more than others

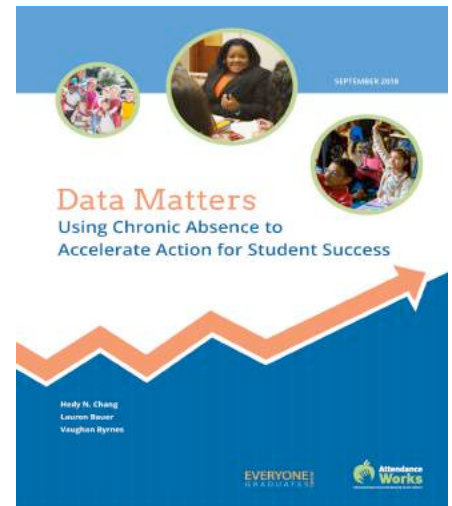
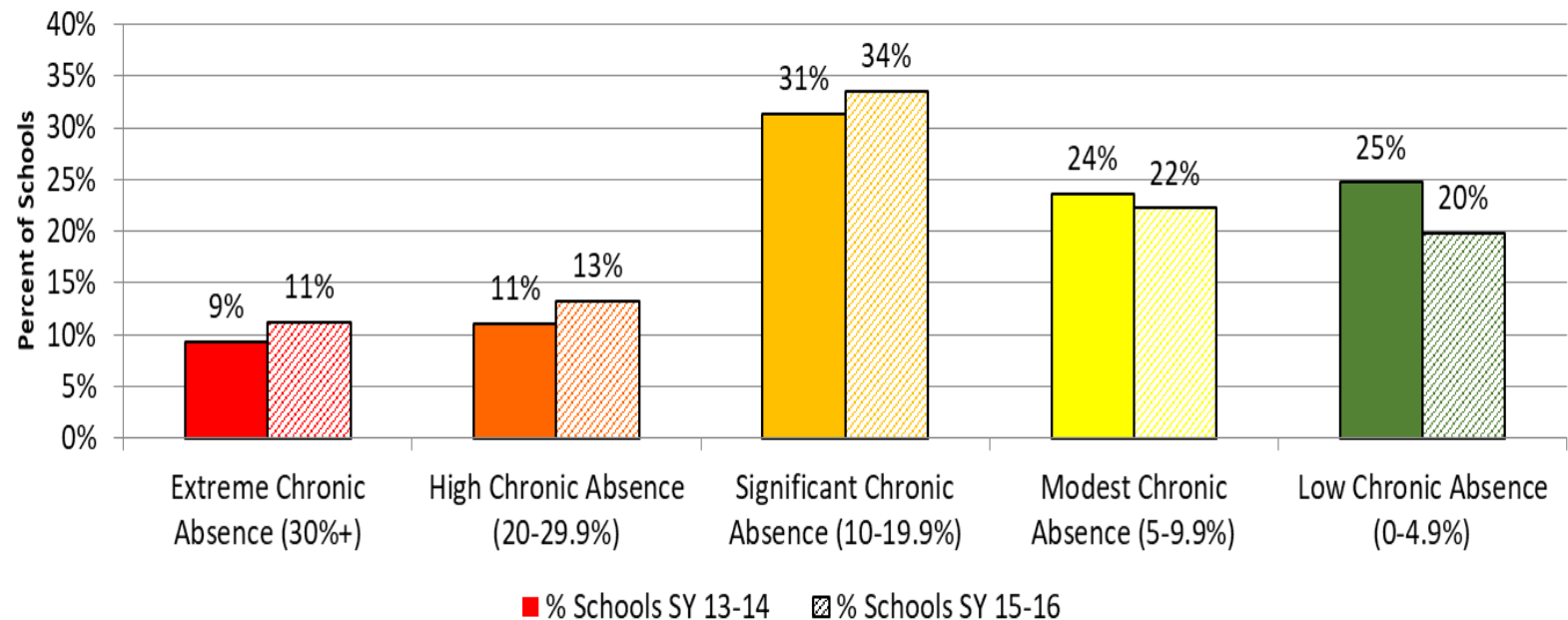


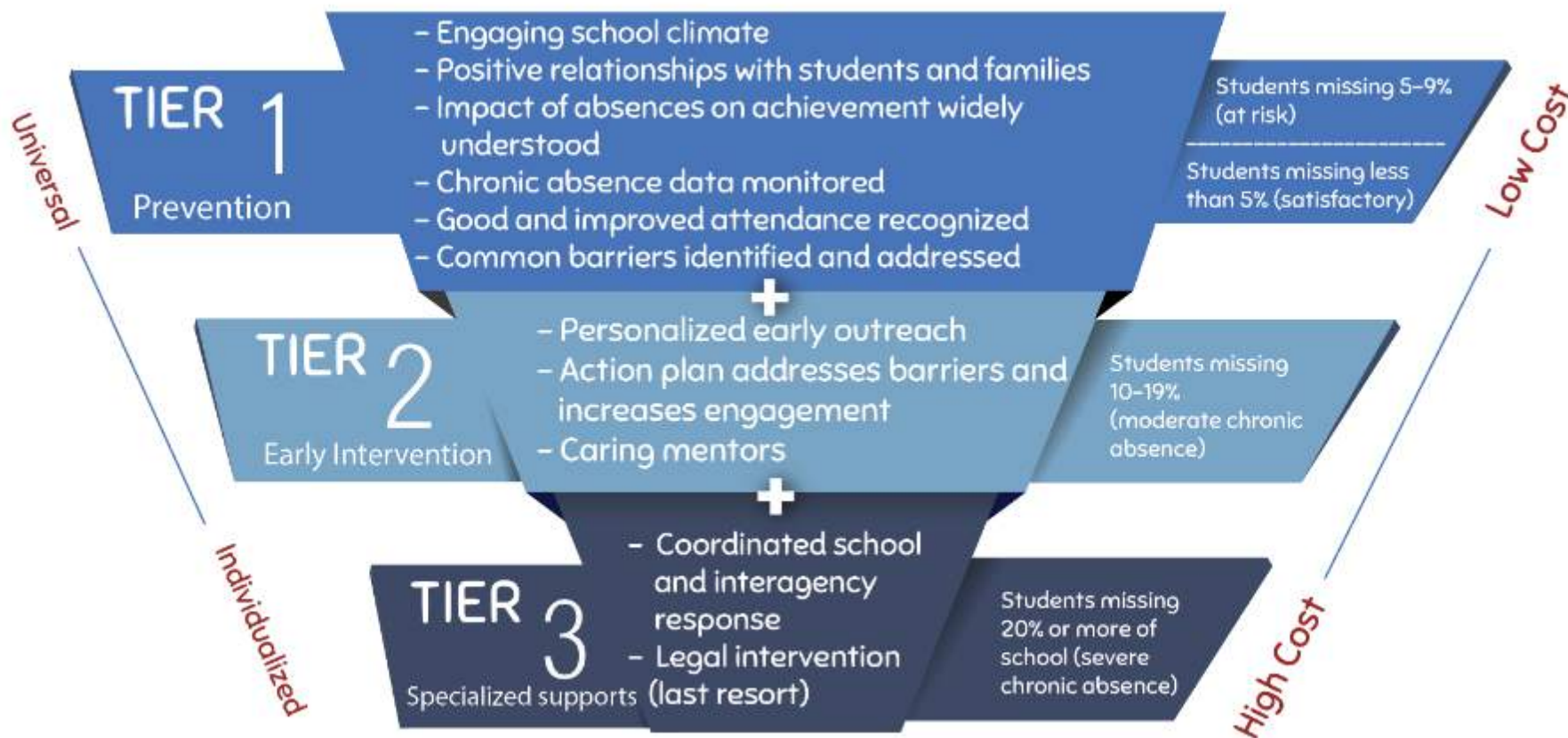
Chart 2 - Distribution of Chronic Absence Levels Across Schools








## Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

**High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional investment is needed in Tier 1 and the Conditions for Learning.**



# Leverage our Teaching Attendance Modules to Learn about A Tiered Approach






## Attendance Works Learning

The mission of Attendance Works is to advance student success and reduce equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Here you will find learning you can apply in the classroom.


Click on the course below and start learning today!



Module 1 - Why We Teach Attendance?



Module 2: Creating a Culture of Attendance (Primary and Secondary)



Module 3: Using Data for Intervention and Support (Primary and Secondary)

**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

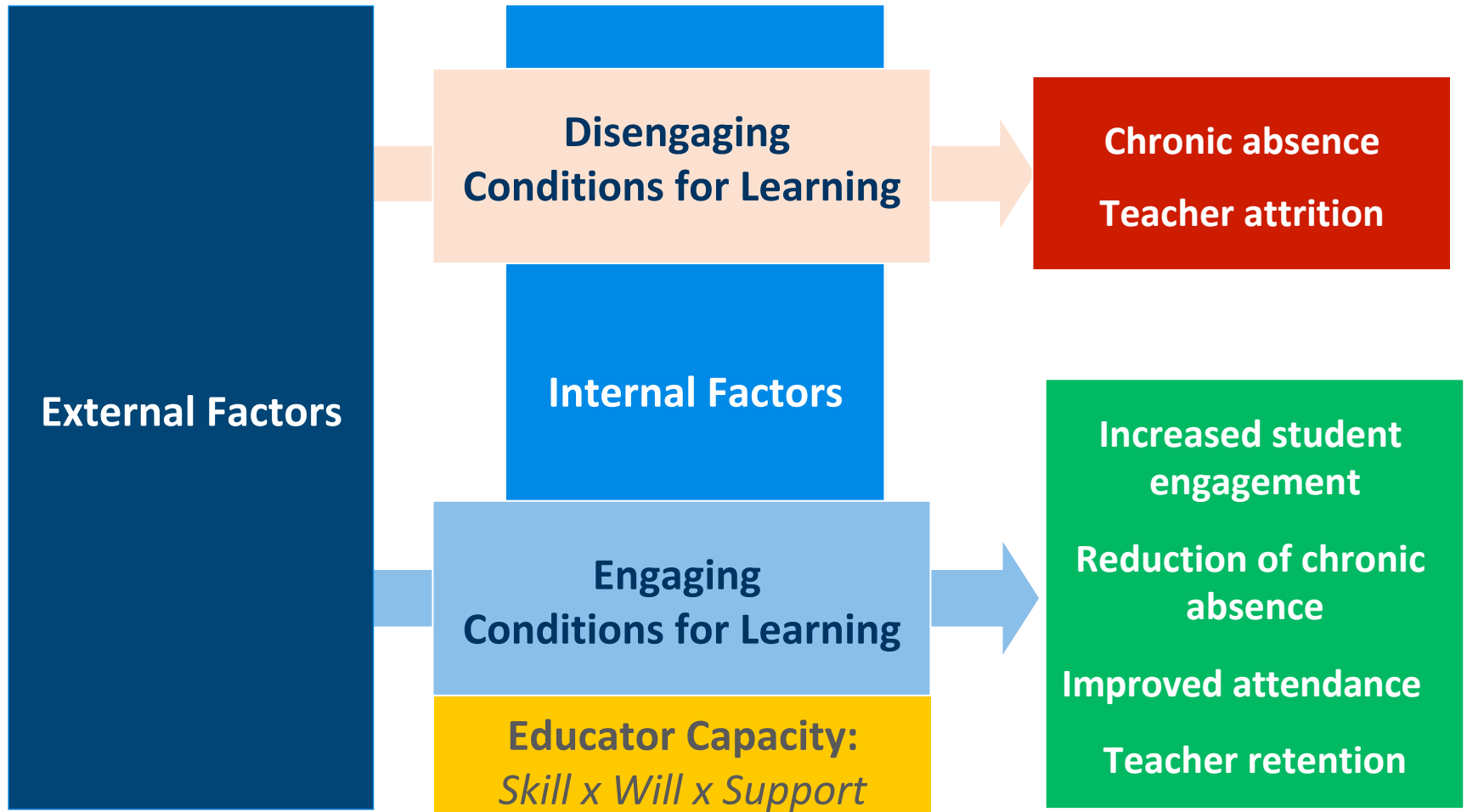
Challenging & Relevant  
Instruction

Educator Social-Emotional  
Competency

Osher & Kendziora (2010)



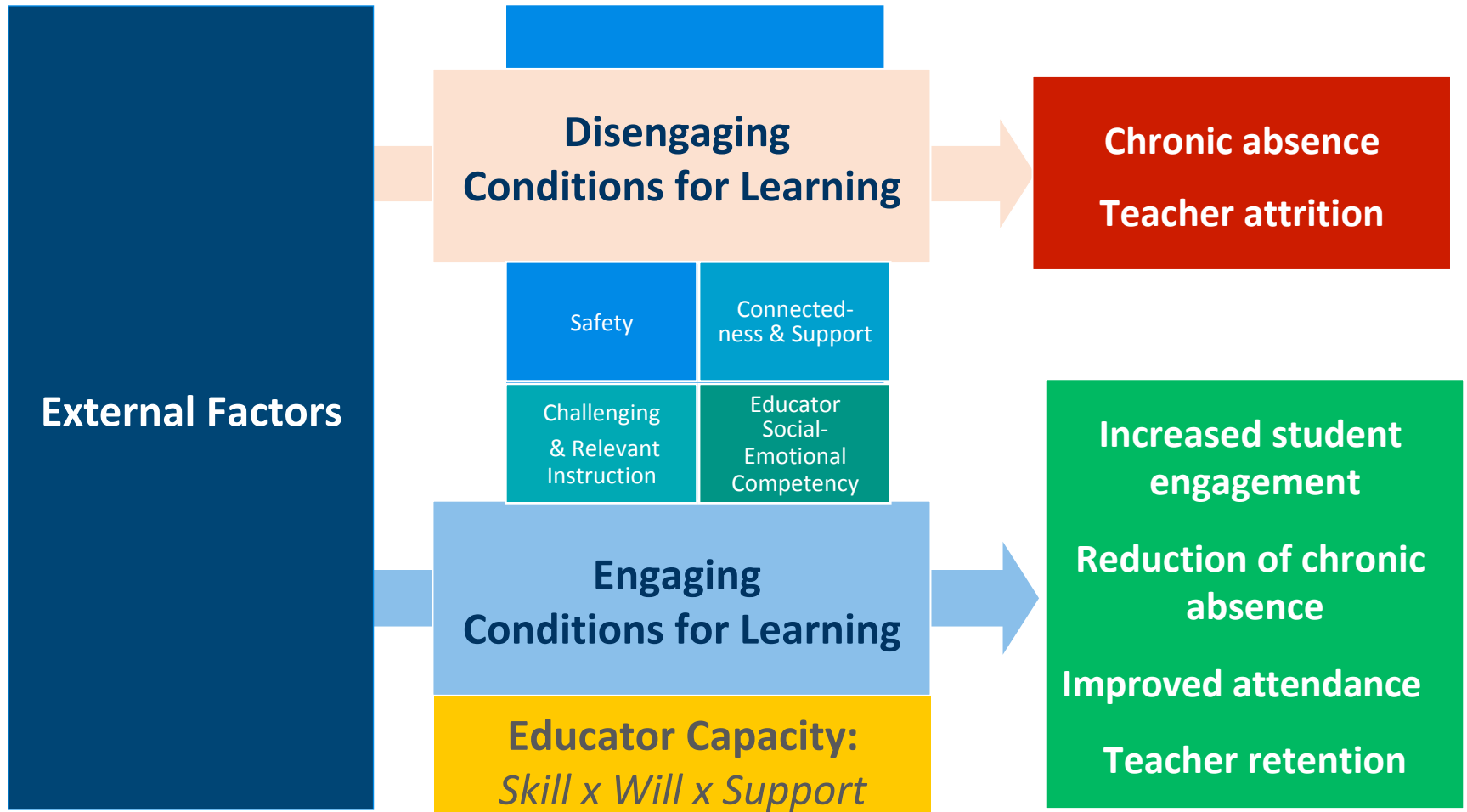
Conditions for Learning mediate the influence of external factors affecting attendance and chronic absence.



(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)



Conditions for Learning mediate the influence of external factors affecting attendance and chronic absence.



(Schanfield, Chang & Osher, in press)

# Educator Capacity

## *Skill x Will x Support*

### SKILL

*Educators with the social and emotional competencies to*

1. employ positive approaches to discipline;
2. embrace culturally responsive practices;
3. integrate social and emotional learning into their pedagogy and curriculum; and
4. provide frequent and helpful feedback without judgement.

### WILL

*Educators who build conditions for learning*

1. examine their own beliefs;
2. believe they can make a difference for students in school regardless of external barriers;
3. work together as a team; and
4. embrace growth, mistakes, support, and guidance (including from families and students).

### SUPPORT

*Educators who have*

1. time, facilities, and resources;
2. community support and involvement;
3. teacher leadership opportunities; and
4. supportive school leadership/ professional development/ instructional support.

**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)

GRPS 

# ABOUT THE DISTRICT

# GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## **7TH LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN MICHIGAN WITH 54 SCHOOLS**

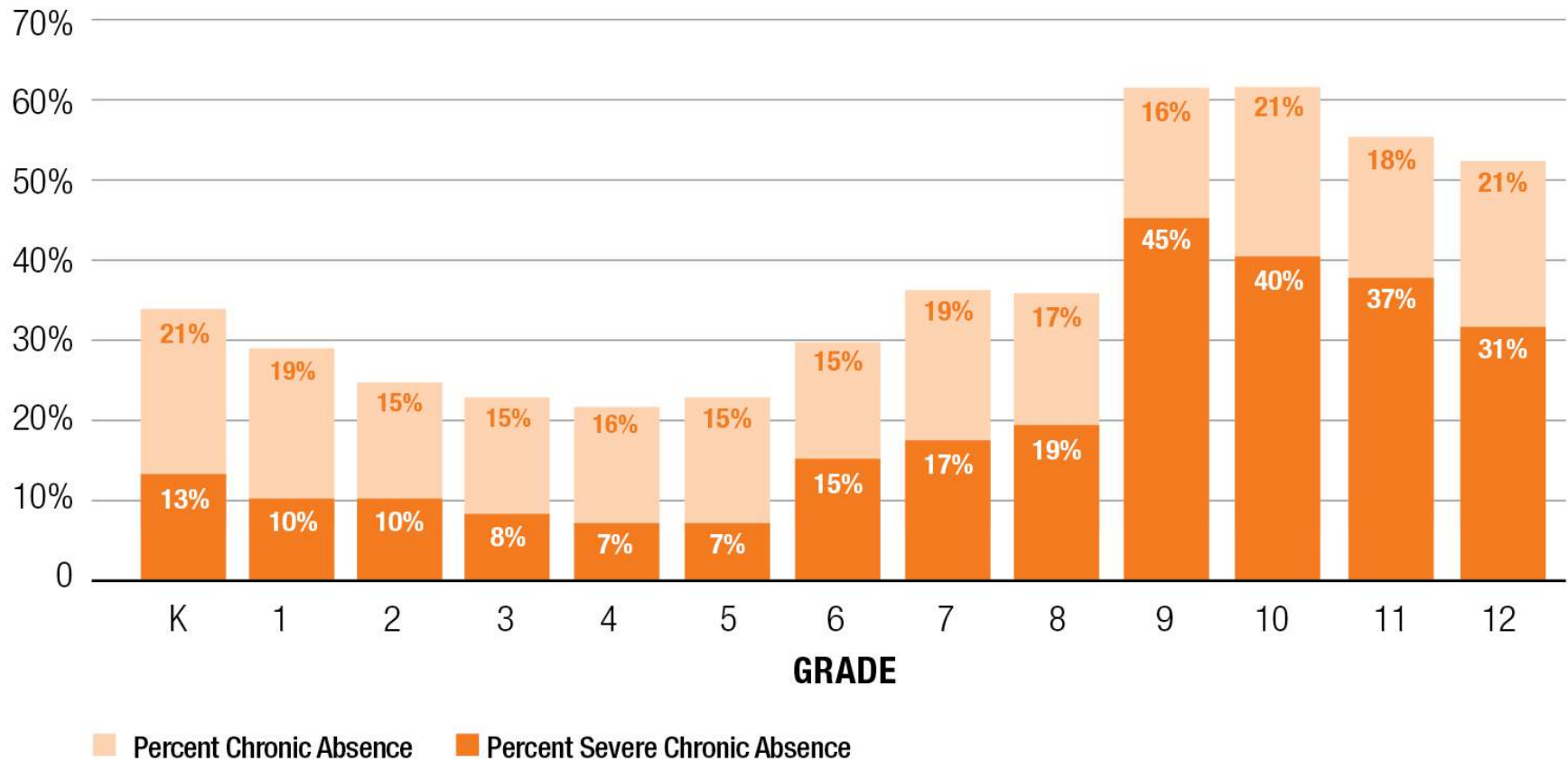
- Nearly 17,000 students
- 80% free/reduced lunch
- 20% special education
- 25% English language learners
- 33% African American  
37% Hispanic  
22% Caucasian

## **3RD LARGEST EMPLOYER IN GRAND RAPIDS**

- 2,700+ employees (*1,400 teachers*)

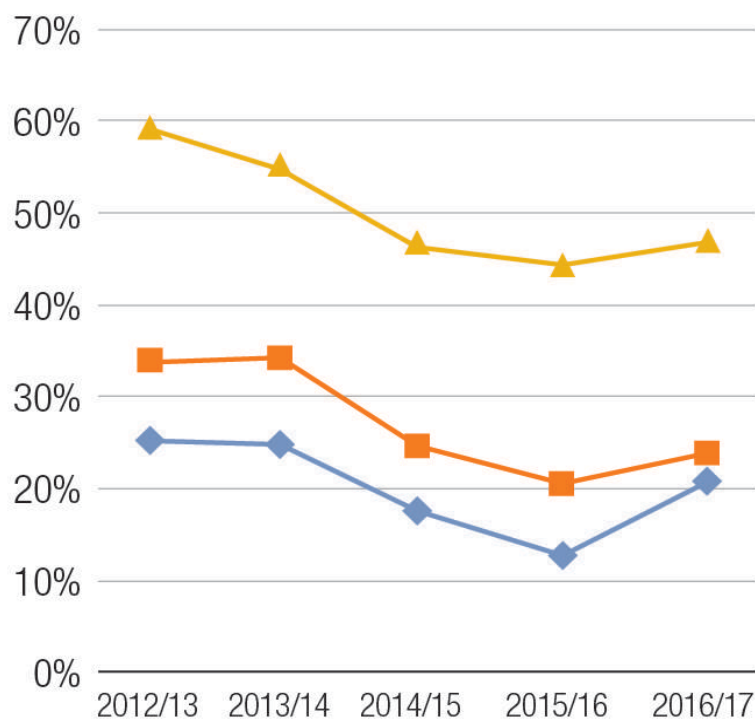
# 2012-2013 CHRONIC ABSENCES

## 36.4% CHRONICALLY ABSENCE

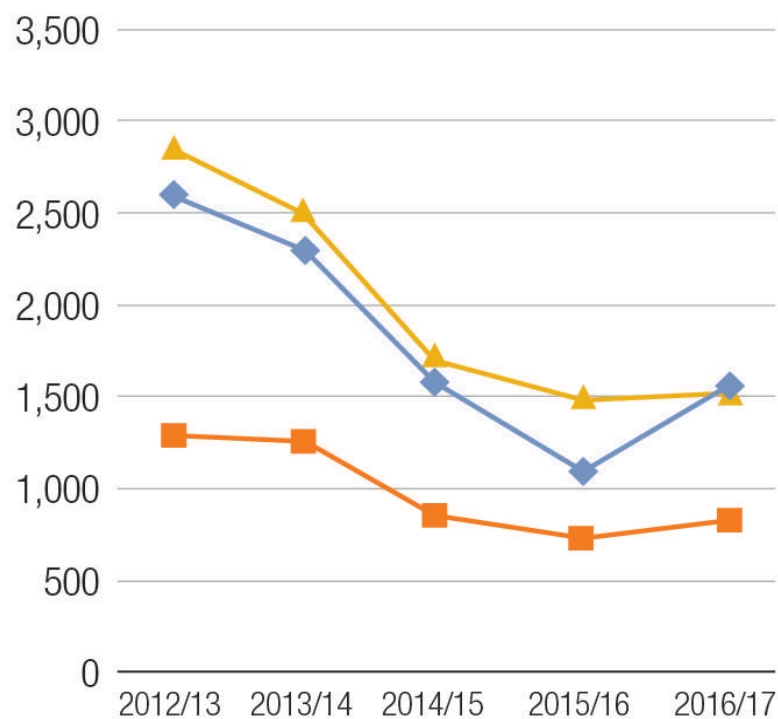


# FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM OVER TIME

## PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS, BY LEVEL



## NUMBER OF STUDENTS, BY LEVEL



◆ Grades K-5    ■ Grades 6-8    ▲ Grades 9-12

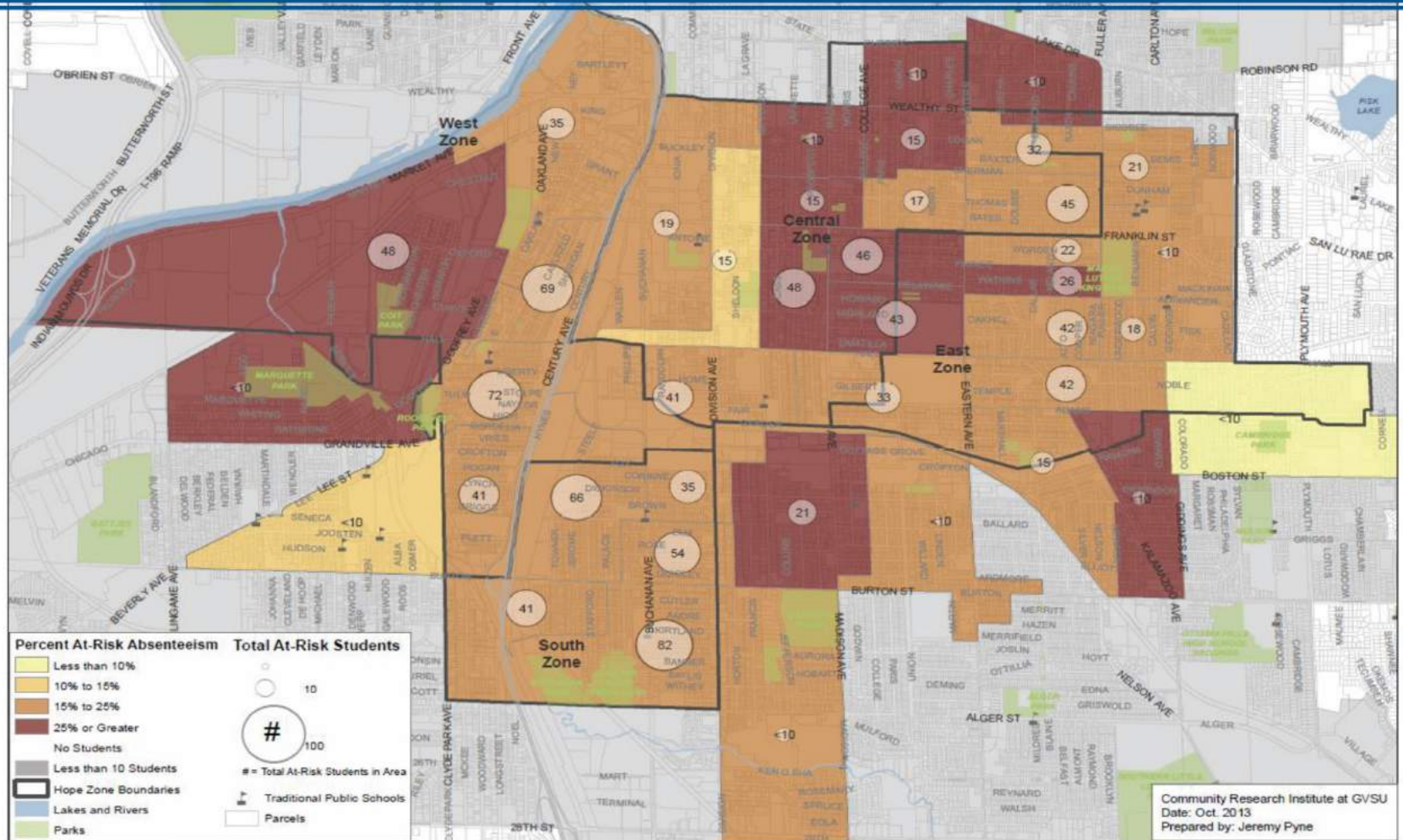


# IMPROVING ATTENDANCE KEYS TO SUCCESS

- 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

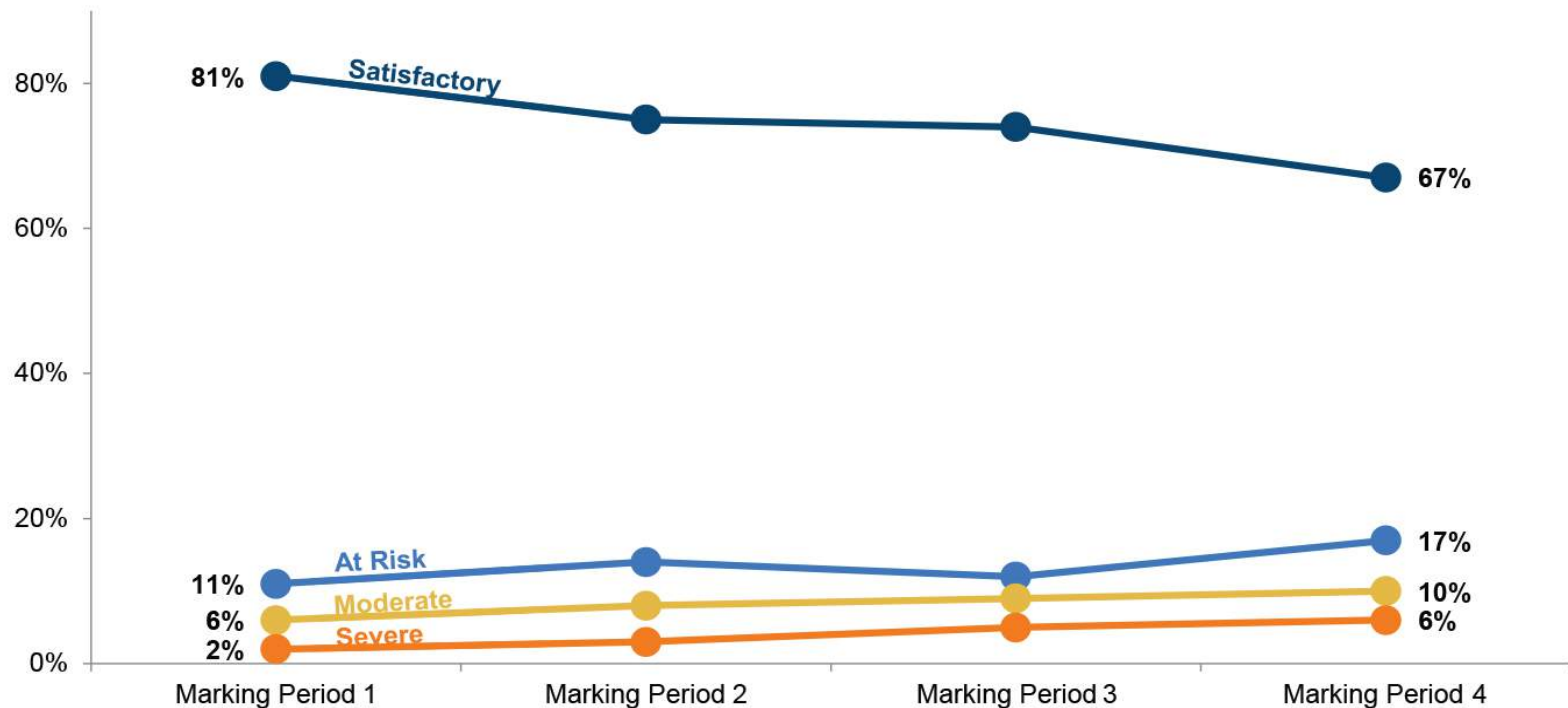


# MAPPING TARGET AREAS



# 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

# COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE PARENT UNIVERSITY



- ✓ 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.**

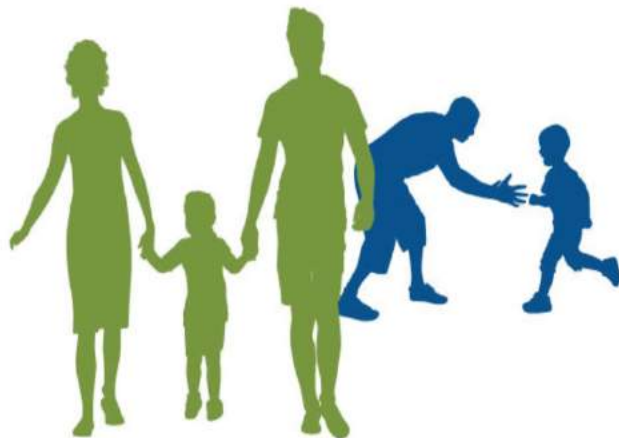


i believe





# ACTIONABLE MESSAGING



# CHALLENGE

STRIVE  
FOR  
**FEWER**  
THAN  
**FIVE DAYS**

# 5

# DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES



Class chart

## NEW LEADER BOARDS

### CHALLENGE 5 TOOLKIT

(For Schools & Community Partners)

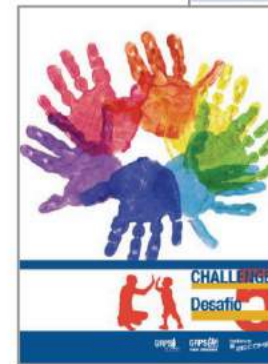
- Yard signs
- Encouragement stickers
- Award ribbons
- Classroom attendance charts
- Home attendance charts
- No-cost recognition strategies
- Request today

### STUDENT ART PARTNERSHIP

- GRPS Fine Arts Department leading
- Attendance posters



Classroom chart



Attendance poster



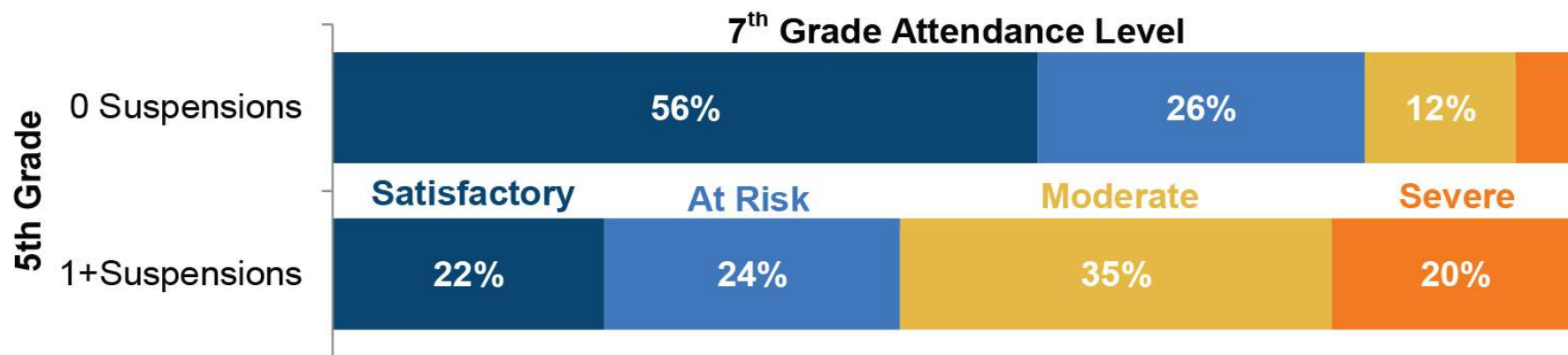
Yard signs/stickers



Home chart

# ATTENDANCE RATES BY SUSPENSION RATES

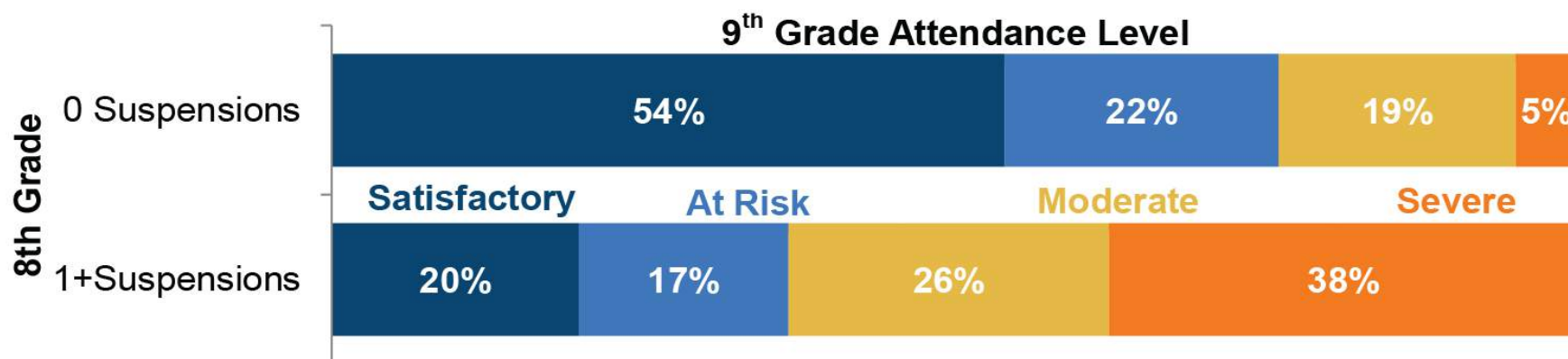
**55% OF STUDENTS**  
suspended at least one time in 5th grade  
**WERE CHRONICALLY ABSENT IN 7TH GRADE**



7TH GRADE ATTENDANCE LEVELS BY 5TH GRADE SUSPENSION RATES

# ATTENDANCE RATES BY SUSPENSION RATES

**63% OF STUDENTS**  
suspended at least one time in 8th grade  
**WERE CHRONICALLY ABSENT IN 9TH GRADE**



9TH GRADE ATTENDANCE LEVELS BY 8TH GRADE SUSPENSION RATES



# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

## WHAT IS SEL?

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 9<sup>th</sup> 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

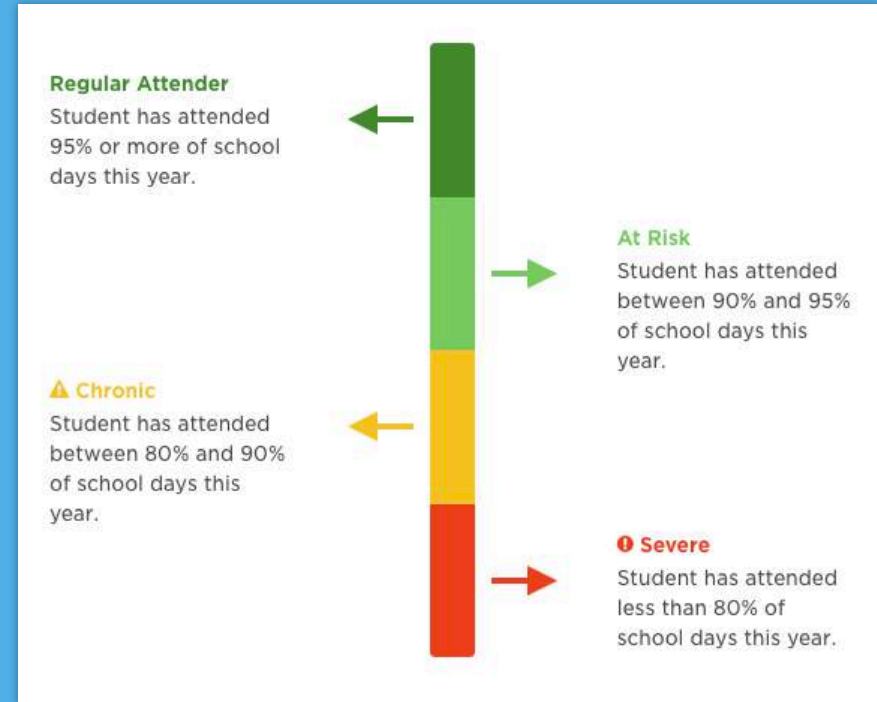
**Taxonomy  
(Clear and  
Consistent)**

**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"

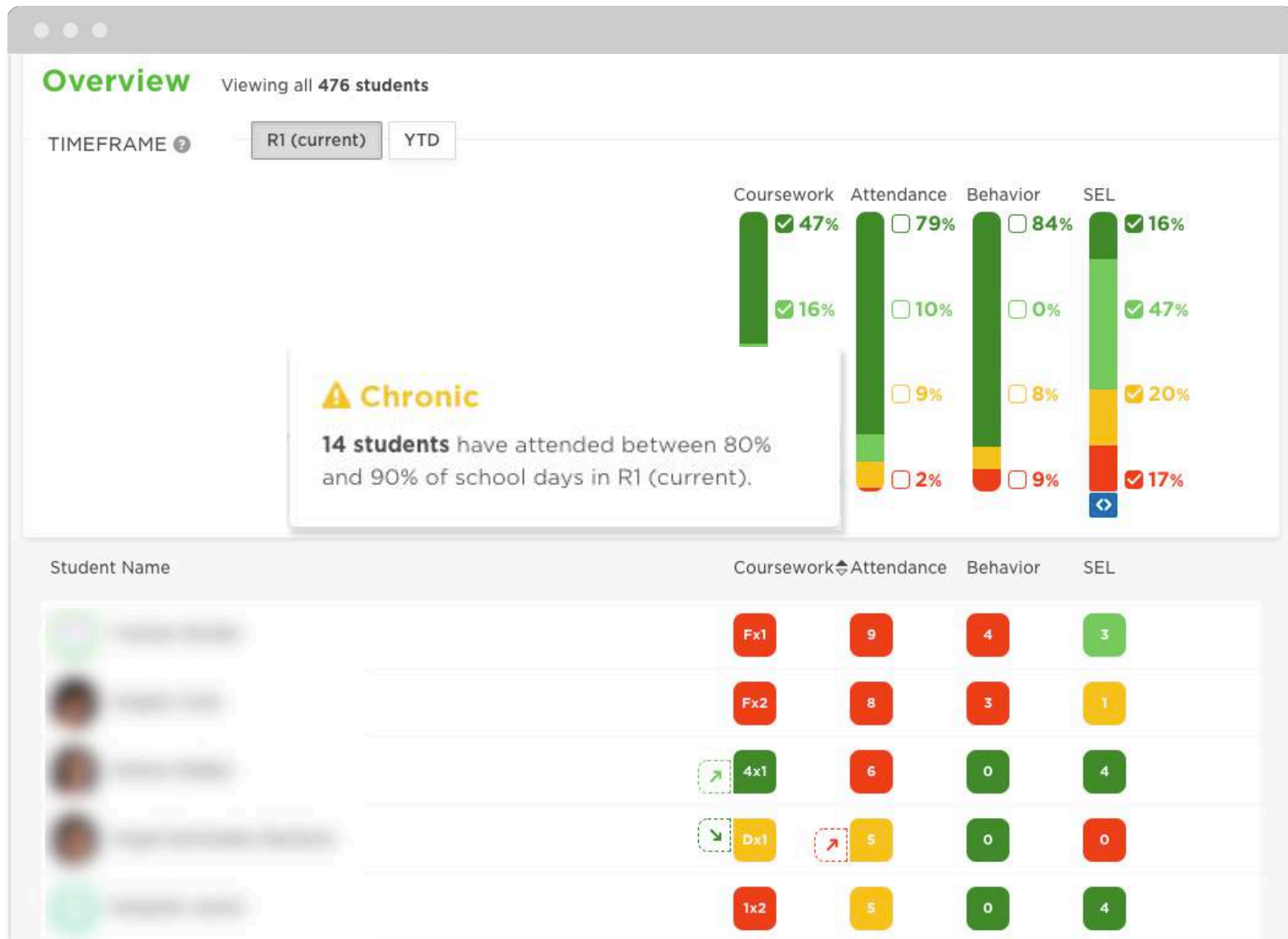


## Clear and Consistent Taxonomy

Panorama ( <i>previously</i> )	Panorama ( <u>Now</u> )
On-Track for College & Career (0-4.99% days missed)	<b>Regular Attender</b> (0-4.99% days missed)
On-Track for Graduation (5-9.99% days missed)	<b>At-Risk</b> (5-9.99% days missed)
At-Risk (10-19.99% days missed)	<b>Chronic</b> (10-19.99% days missed)
Critical (20% or more days missed)	<b>Severe</b> (20% or more days missed)



# 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!** 

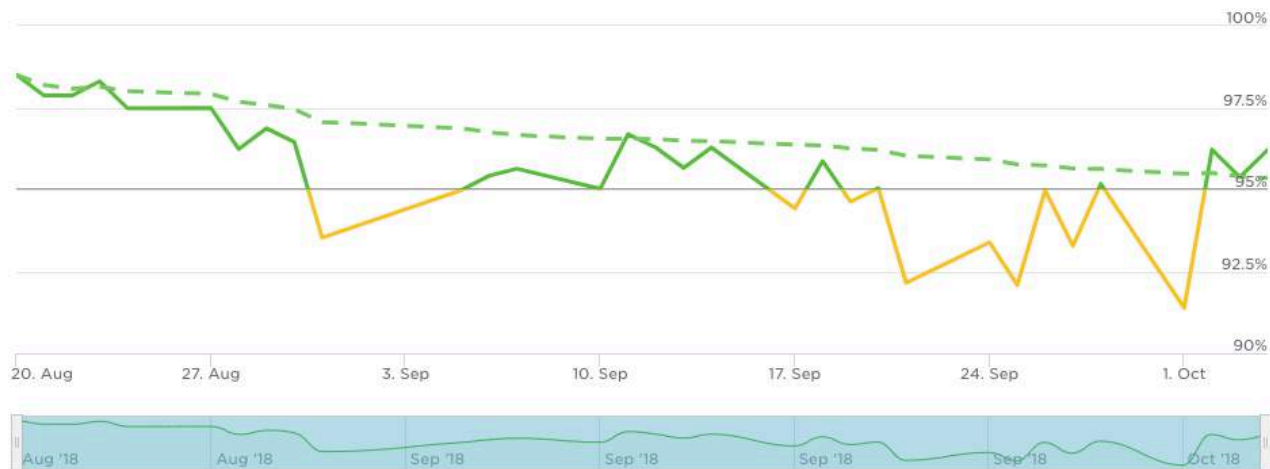
**96.2%** on Thursday, October 4th  
daily attendance **(3-day streak)**

**95.5%** year to date  
average daily attendance




What is our daily attendance?

1w 1m 3m 6m **YTD**

From Aug 20, 2018 To Oct 4, 2018



Who missed school on Thursday, October 4th?

Student Name	Grade Level	Reason	Streak	YTD Attendance
		Parent Excused	13 days	20
		Unexcused Absent	7 days	7

Summary

**18 students absent**

Reason

**12** Unexcused Absent

**6** Parent Excused

# Digging Deeper with Panorama

## 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



# Digging Deeper with Panorama

How did students respond to each question?

Sorted by Question score ▾ Highest to lowest ▾

QUESTION

› How confident are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned in your classes?

**54 %**

responded favorably



QUESTION

› How confident are you that you will remember what you learned in your current classes, next year?

**43 %**

responded favorably



QUESTION

› How confident are you that you can learn all the material presented in your classes?

**42 %**

responded favorably



QUESTION

› When complicated ideas are presented in class, how confident are you that you can understand them?

**33 %**

responded favorably



QUESTION

› How confident are you that you can do the hardest work that is assigned in your classes?

**31 %**

responded favorably



# Digging Deeper with Panorama

## Playbook

What are strategies for improving **Self-Efficacy**?

### Asking for Help

inspirED



### Self-Efficacy Toolkit

Transforming Education



### Asking for Help

inspirED



### Help Students Create Goal Setting Portfolios

Bonnie Nieves



[See more on Playbook →](#)

### Asking for Help

Plan out and practice asking for help at school and at home.



Average rating: 5.0 / 5.0

☆ Add to My Playbook

inspirED

inspirED

#### 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.

A black and white photograph of a graduate in a cap and gown, seen from behind, looking towards a large, brightly lit screen at a graduation ceremony. The screen displays a blurred image of a person. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

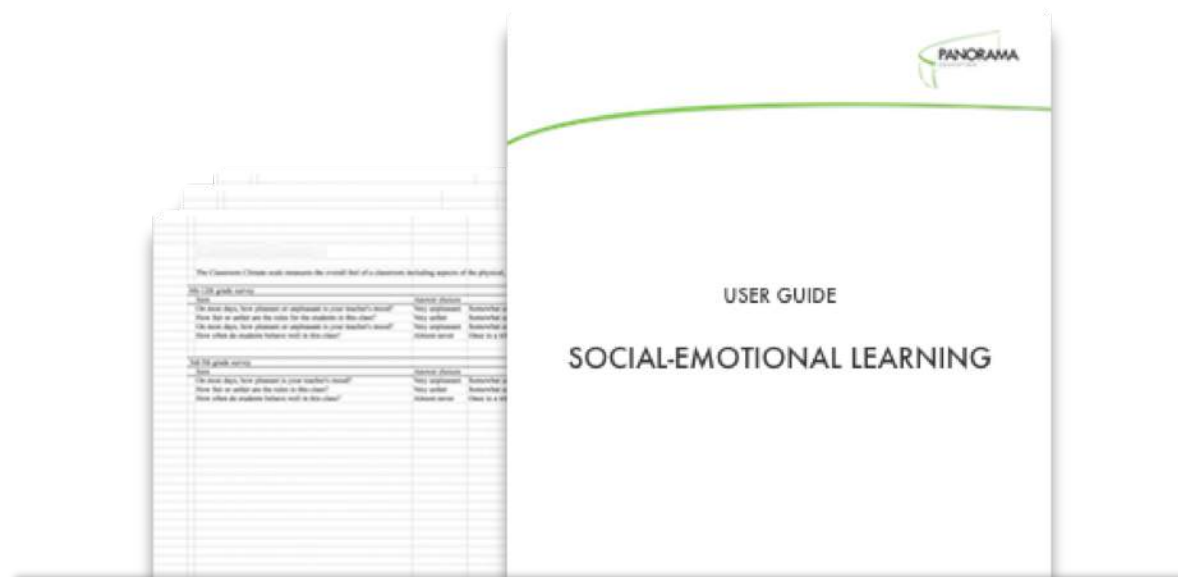
**"When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating."**



The background of the slide is a photograph of a paved road with a yellow center line, receding into the distance. The road is flanked by trees with autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

# **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](http://www.panoramaed.com/social-emotional-learning)**

# 5 Ways Innovative School Districts Are Reducing Chronic Absenteeism



*Free guide for school and district leaders:*

**[www.panoramaed.com/resources](http://www.panoramaed.com/resources)**

# Questions & Answers

**Join the discussion**

 **#SELwebinar**

# Thank you!

**Questions?**

**[info@panoramaed.com](mailto:info@panoramaed.com)**