Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025
Webinar 3 of 4

August 6, 2025

www.attendanceworks.org

Welcome!

S. Kwesi Rollins
Chief Program Officer
Institute for Educational Leadership
Chair, Advisory Board, Attendance Works

Hedy N. Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

About the Institute for Educational Leadership

IEL's vision is an equitable society in which shared leadership effectively uses all available resources for the betterment of their communities.

IEL partners with communities, working with local entities to fill service needs and support them in the long-term on their transformational leadership journey. IEL:

- identifies and implements innovative strategies particularly where educational, economic and social challenges or gaps exist.

- has developed, trained and supported thousands of leaders across various networks.

- works at the local, state and national level, investing in community leaders of all ages, stages and sectors.

To learn more visit: www.iel.org

About Attendance Works

Attendance Works advances student success in school and beyond for all students by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state and national level, Attendance Works:

- Advances better **policy**
- Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- Catalyzes needed **research**

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's "go-to" resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org.

Convening Partners
AAC 2025!

Agenda

I.   **Welcome**

II. **Attendance Awareness Campaign**
Kwesi Rollins, Chief Program Officer, IEL

III. **Why Student Connectedness Matters for Attendance**
Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works

IV. **Panel: Strategies for Nurturing Student Connectedness**
- **Naomi Tolentino Miranda**, Coordinator of Attend to Achieve, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- **Zaneta Boles**, Principal of Silver City Elementary School, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- **Stacey Losh**, Manager of Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support, West Virginia Department of Education
- **Cynthia Sorsaia**, Coordinator of Communities In Schools, West Virginia Department of Education

IV. **Closing Reflections & Resources**

Attendance Works

www.attendanceworks.org

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025
Webinar Series
Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

Webinar 1 Teams Make all the Difference for Supporting Attendance
April 2, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 2 Health, Well-being and Safety is Essential to Showing Up
May 14, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 3 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement
August 6, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET **(TODAY)**

Webinar 4 Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance & Learning
September 24, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/

Attendance Works

Five Key Actions & Messages for 2025

- ❖ **Embrace a problem-solving approach driven by data to improve attendance.**

- ❖ **Engage parents and guardians as vital partners.**

- ❖ **Create a safe, connected and engaged learning environment.**

- ❖ **Support the health and well-being of students, families and school staff.**

- ❖ **Involve the whole community in your strategies and tactics.**

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/count-us-toolkit/what-are-the-key-messages-2/

Thank You to our Campaign Sponsors for supporting this webinar!

KAISER PERMANENTE®

Kaiser Permanente is proud of our Thriving Schools initiative, which works to strengthen the health and well-being of school communities across the country, so every school succeeds, every employee excels, and every child thrives. To learn more, visit kp.org/thrivingschools.

SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY associates, inc.

School Technology is an exclusive partner of Skyward and provides a wide range of integrated hardware and software solutions to improve data quality. From student attendance to employee time tracking, School Tech solutions help so schools can focus on the bigger issues.

Attendance Works

Welcome to our new AAC partners!

Learn more about the Attendance Awareness Campaign partners on our website!

Support Attendance Works

We rely on contributors like you to help us keep Attendance Works' resources free for everyone.

Join our movement and donate today!

Donate

Attendance Works

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

AAC 2025 Slogan!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

- Highlights the role that school plays in promoting student well-being and achievement

- Connects school attendance with realizing our hopes and dreams

- Emphasizes the link between regular attendance and a well-prepared, next generation workforce

Attendance
Works

National Chronic Absence Crisis

➔ **Chronic absence doubled from 1 in 6 students pre-pandemic to 1 in 3 in 2021-22.**

➔ **It slightly decreased in 2022-23.**

➔ **It is now approximately 1 in 4.**

➔ **Chronic absence remains strongly associated with worse outcomes for achievement, graduation and executive functioning.**

Source: US Department of Education, Ed Facts

Reducing Chronic Absence Requires Identifying and Addressing Root Causes of Chronic Absence

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Lack of access to needed services
- System involvement
- Unpredictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to technology
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, engaging instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/

Qualitative Data Tools

Gather information about why students do or don't attend school

❏ **Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT)**: Identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance

❏ **Empathy Interviews:** Targeted, one-on-one conversations with a small group of students

❏ **2x10:** Relationship and trust building strategy; spend two minutes per day for 10 days talking with a student

❏ **Student Focus Groups:** Moderated small group discussions to explore experiences and perspectives

❏ **Attendance Café:** Engage parents in discussions about attendance

❏ **Student and Parent Surveys:** Ask about reasons behind their absences

❏ **Shadow a Student:** See school through your student's eyes and take action to create change.

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/qualitative-data/

Attendance Works

Address Aversion & Disengagement Through Student Connectedness

Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement	Misconceptions
• Chronic and acute illness • Family responsibilities or home situation • Trauma • Poor transportation • Housing and food insecurity • Lack of access to needed services • System involvement • Unpredictable schedules for learning • Lack of access to technology • Community violence	• Struggling academically and/or behaviorally • Unwelcoming school climate • Social and peer challenges • Anxiety • Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices • Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations • Caregivers had negative educational experiences	• Lack of challenging, engaging instruction • Bored • No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages) • Lack of enrichment opportunities • Lack of academic and behavioral support • Failure to earn credits • Need to work conflicts with being in high school	• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused • Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning • Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences • Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness • Attendance only matters in the older grades • Suspensions don't count as absence

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/

Students are connected to school when they:

01 Believe that there is an adult in the school who cares about them

02 Have a supportive peer group

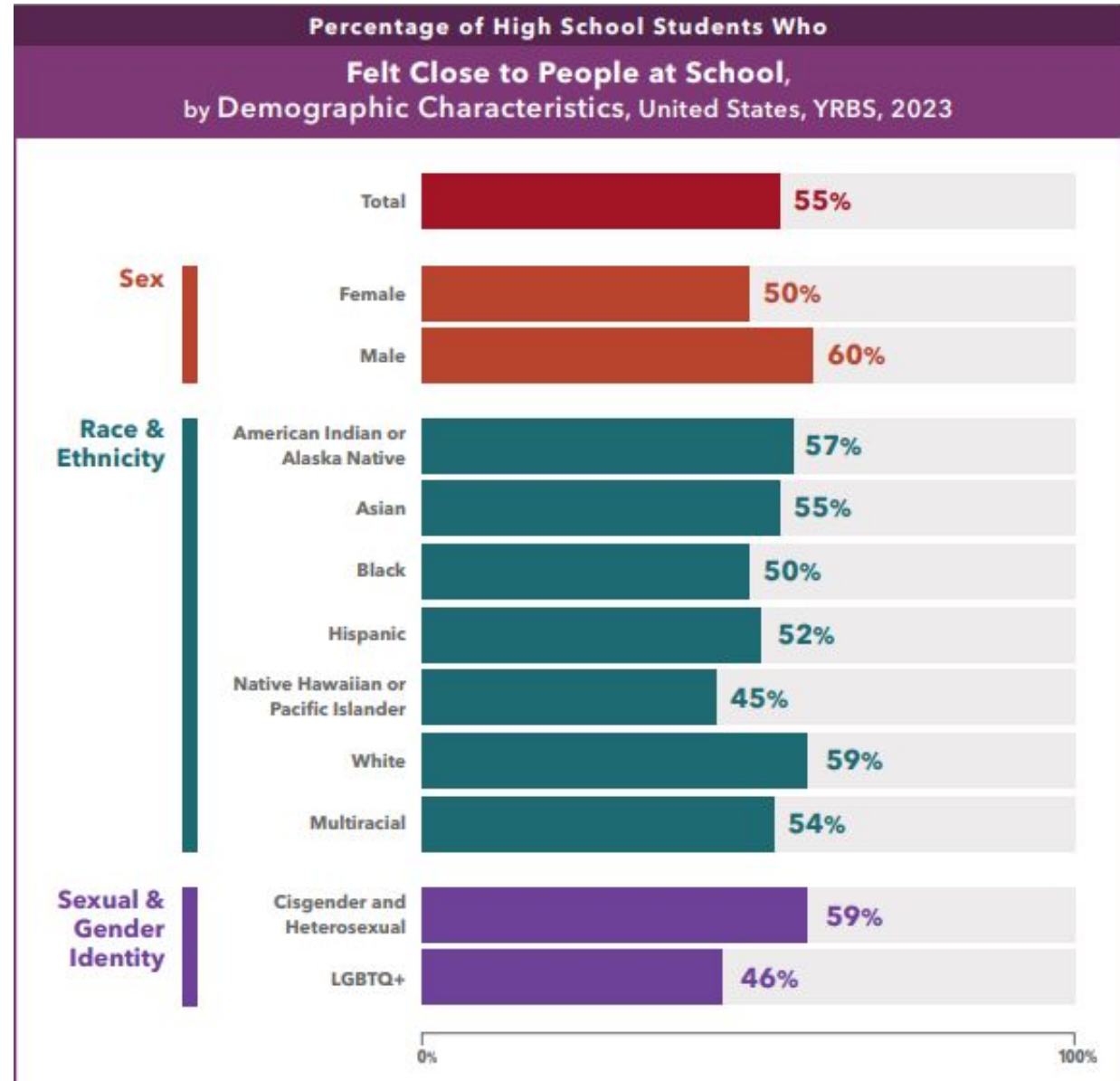**03** Engage in activities that bring meaning

04 Feel seen, heard and welcome at school

SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

In 2023, 55% of high school students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt close to people at their school, also referred to as school connectedness. Male students were more likely than female students to feel close to people at school. Cisgender and heterosexual students were more likely than LGBTQ+ students to feel close to people at school.

Source: Centers for Disease Control YRBS, 2023
https://www.cdc.gov/yrbs/dstr/index.html

Percentage of High School Students Who

Felt Close to People at School,
by Demographic Characteristics, United States, YRBS, 2023

	Total	55%
Sex	Female	50%
	Male	60%
Race & Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	57%
	Asian	55%
	Black	50%
	Hispanic	52%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	45%
	White	59%
	Multiracial	54%
Sexual & Gender Identity	Cisgender and Heterosexual	59%
	LGBTQ+	46%

Addressing Student Connectedness
(Examples of Tiered Supports)

Universal	Tier II	Tier III
• Greetings by the door • Morning meetings / Advisories • Connection surveys • Celebration of student successes • Clubs, activities and athletics • Student leadership opportunities • Peer learning • Bullying prevention programs	• Success Mentoring • Skill building small groups • Intensive Tutoring • Check-in/Check-out or check and connect • Prioritizing students for expanded learning • Interest inventory	• Targeted outreach • Therapeutic supports • Motivational interviewing • Wraparound support • Deeper evaluation to determine root causes

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/

Attendance Works

Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance

District

Capacity Building

Shared Responsibility

Actionable Data

Schools

Students & Families

Adequate Resources

Positive Engagement

Strategic Partnerships

Community

Attendance Works

www.attendanceworks.org

21
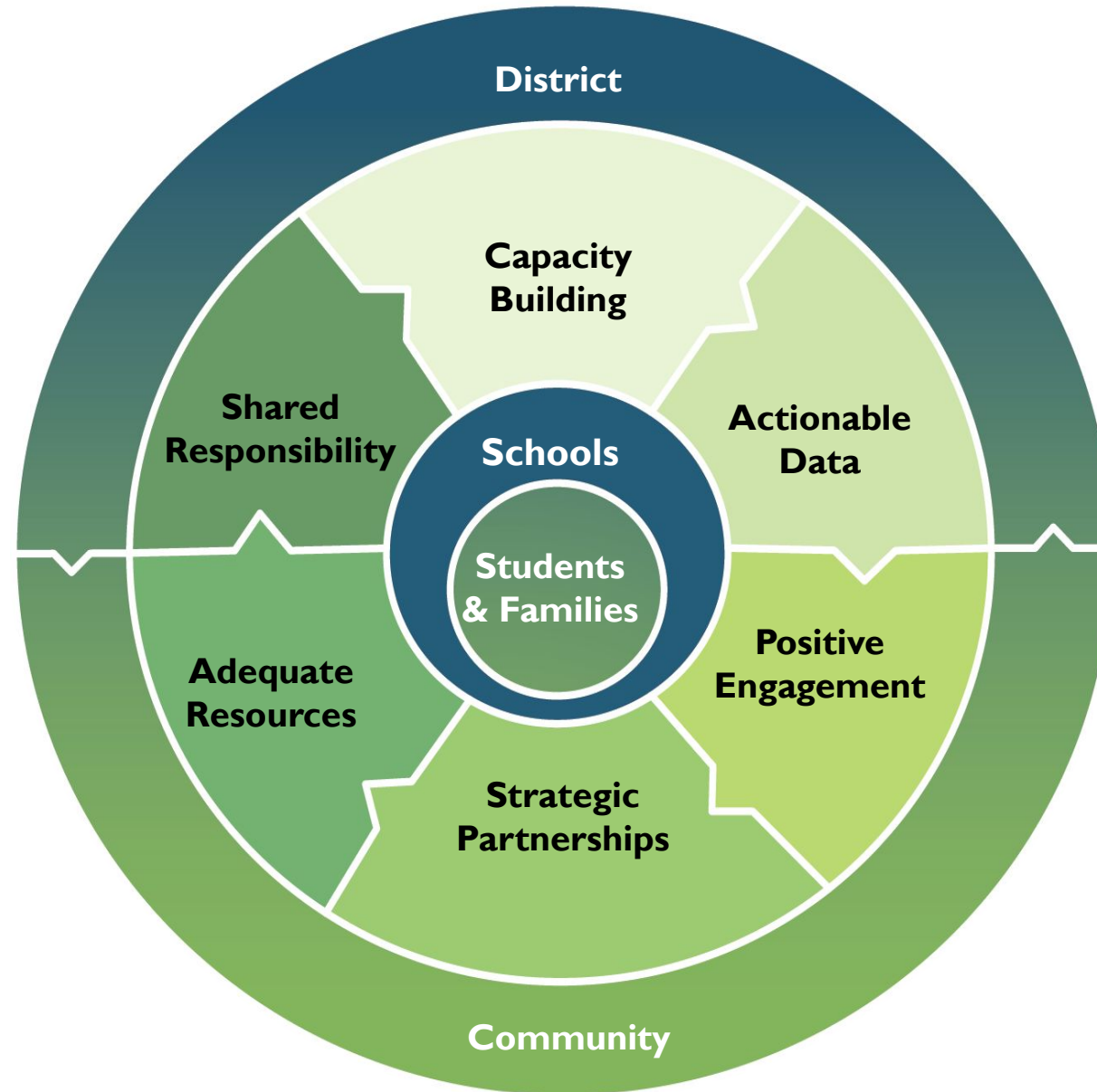
When we encourage students to show up to school regularly, even when it is difficult, we are helping them learn the life skill of taking on challenges. This is a real skill for real life—one that helps students succeed now and in the future.

Ellen Galinsky, President & Co-Founder, Families and Work Institute

Healing requires relationships, hope and time, not labels. With our young people we can build a plan to do the work, chunk it into manageable sizes and celebrate successes as they achieve their goals.

Dr. Pam Cantor, Founder & CEO, The Human Potential LAB

Panelists

Naomi Tolentino Miranda
Coordinator of Attend to
Achieve, Kansas City, Kansas
Public Schools

Zaneta Boles
Principal of Silver City
Elementary School, Kansas
City, Kansas Public Schools

Stacey Losh
Manager of ESEA,
Improvement and Support
Office, West Virginia
Department of Education

Cynthia Sorsaia
Coordinator of
Communities In Schools,
West Virginia Department
of Education

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

Building Connection to End Chronic Absenteeism

Naomi Tolentino Miranda
Coordinator of Attend to Achieve

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

- **Urban** public school district located in Wyandotte County (WyCo)

- Population **156,607**

- Largest school district in WyCo and the fifth largest school district in the state of Kansas with just **over 22,000 students enrolled**

- ESOL : **65 languages** spoken and represented throughout the entire district. The top five languages other than English spoken are: Spanish, Swahili, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Burmese

- 50 building (including EC and Alternative)

KANSAS CITY
KANSAS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

KCKPS launched the Attend to Achieve (AtoA) team to **shift from punitive measures toward early, relationship-based interventions** that address chronic absenteeism.

By building student connectedness and fostering a welcoming school culture, AtoA partners with schools, families, and the community to provide tiered supports and equip every building with the tools needed to help students feel supported and attend consistently.

KCKPS Chronic Absence Data
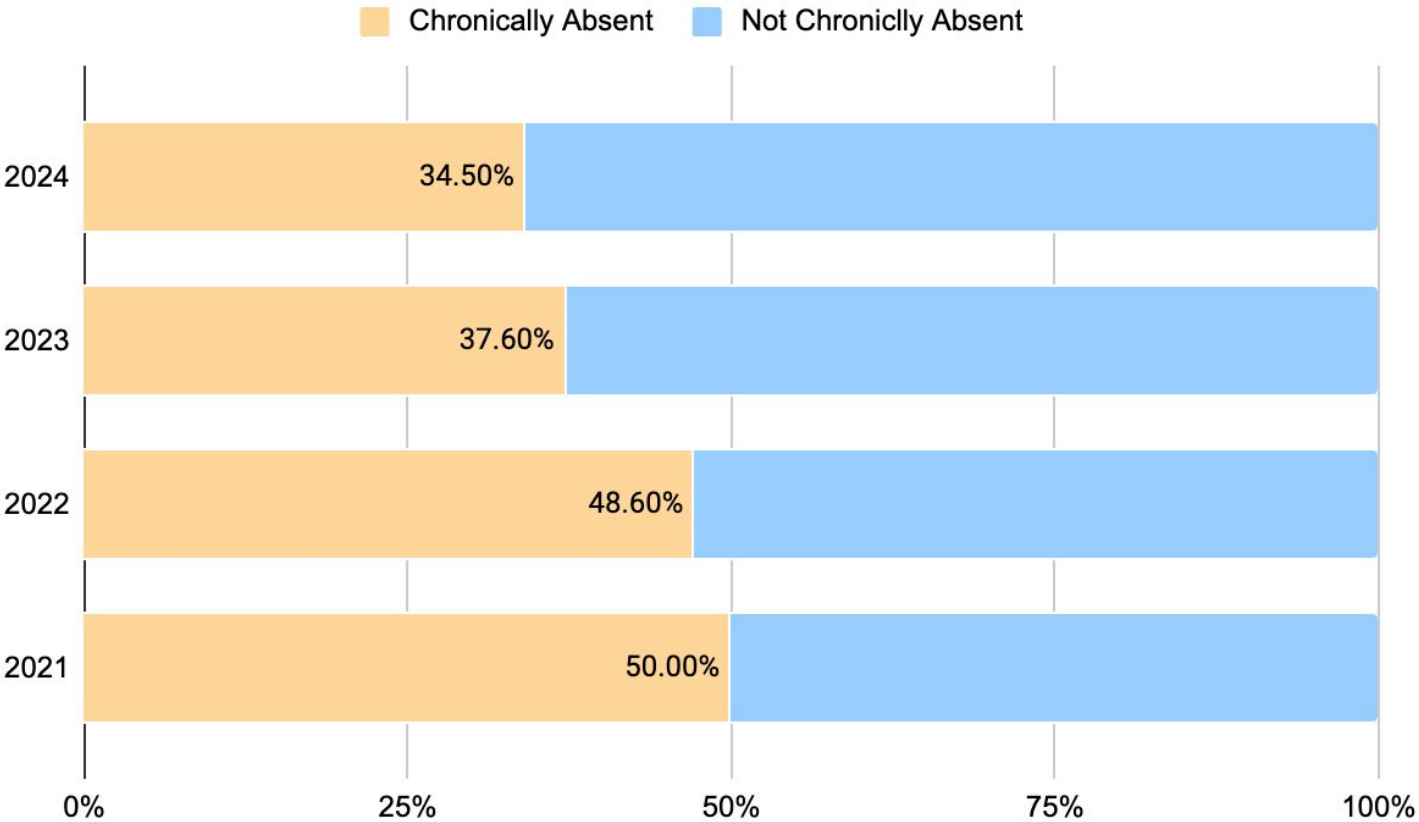
A District Wide Approach

1. District **Attendance Awareness Campaign** around student connectedness

2. Establishment of **Building Attendance Teams**
    a. Coaching and targeted Professional Development around Chronic Absenteeism and SEL-TS practices
    b. Ongoing attendance data review
    c. **Building Level Attendance Plans**

At the end of the 2023-24 SY, 100% of schools will have developed an Attendance Plan for the upcoming school year following the Attendance/TS-TS-SEL MTSS model

KANSAS CITY
KANSAS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Building Attendance Plans

1. District provided the interventions around student connectedness

    a. Tier 1: Morning meeting or Restorative Practice Circles

    b. Tier 2: Relationship Building Activity to ensure all students are connected to an adult: Relationship Mapping / 2x10

2. Supplementary strategy selected by the building

    a. Positive Calls

    b. Student Celebrations

    c. Mentoring

ATTEND to ACHIEVE

Attendance Plan (School Name)

Tier 1	**Building Tier 1 Intervention:** Consistent Parent Communication to Increase School Connectedness **District Tier 1 Intervention:** Daily Morning Meetings, Back-to-School Letter
Tier 2	**Building Tier 2 Intervention:** Caring Calls / Positive contact with families of students who are moderately chronically absent **District Tier 2 Intervention:** Relationship Building Activity (like 2x10 Strategy / Relationship Mapping) & Student Success Plan for CA students last Year
Tier 3	**Tier 3:** Attendance Meetings / Attendance Plans: The team will schedule an attendance 101 meeting monthly to facilitate the parents' meetings

Example 2025-26 Attendance Plan

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Back to School	Include attendance messaging in back-to-school letters, newsletters, orientation materials, recorded messages, and open houses.	Identify and call the families of students who were moderately chronically absent last year with a positive, welcoming message before school starts.	Identify the families of students who were severely chronically absent or truant last year and create a Student Success Plan for the current school year in collaboration with the parents.
Admin	Ensure all back-to-school communications include attendance expectations and support. Share clear expectations with staff for promoting attendance from Day	Assign staff to call families of moderate CA students; share the flagged student list.	Review Tier 3 list, guide the success plan process, ensure families are invited to FA.
Attendance Team	Add attendance to family night agendas and provide sample language.	Provide sample language for letters/calls. Track calls.	Plan a parent meeting during FA for students who were severely CA and/or truant last year
Teachers	Share attendance messaging with families.	Make welcome calls to moderate CA families; log in PLP.	Support FA meetings and contribute to student success plans.
August – October	Tier 1 Celebrate good and improved attendance weekly during announcements or bulletin	Tier 2 Teachers make a quick, positive call or message home when a student reaches 2 absences (excused or	Tier 3 Design a plan and calendar for **Attendance 101 Interventions** (small group or individual support) for the

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

Silver City Elementary School

Zaneta Boles
Principal

Silver City Elementary

Chronic Absence Data

Chronic Absence bar chart showing Chronically Absent (tan) vs Not Chroniclly Absent (blue) by year:
- 2024: 38.30%
- 2023: 43.90%
- 2022: 49.90%
- 2021: 54.90%

X-axis: 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%
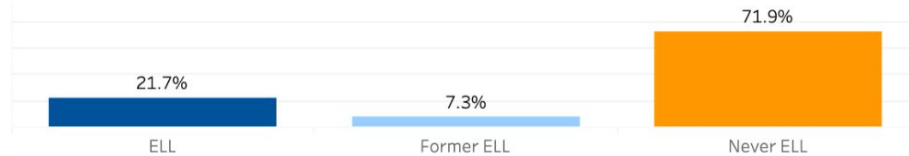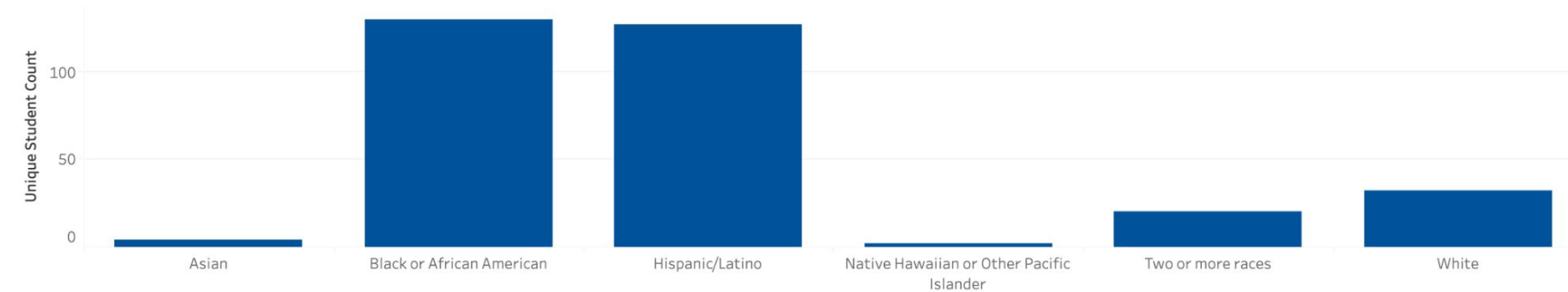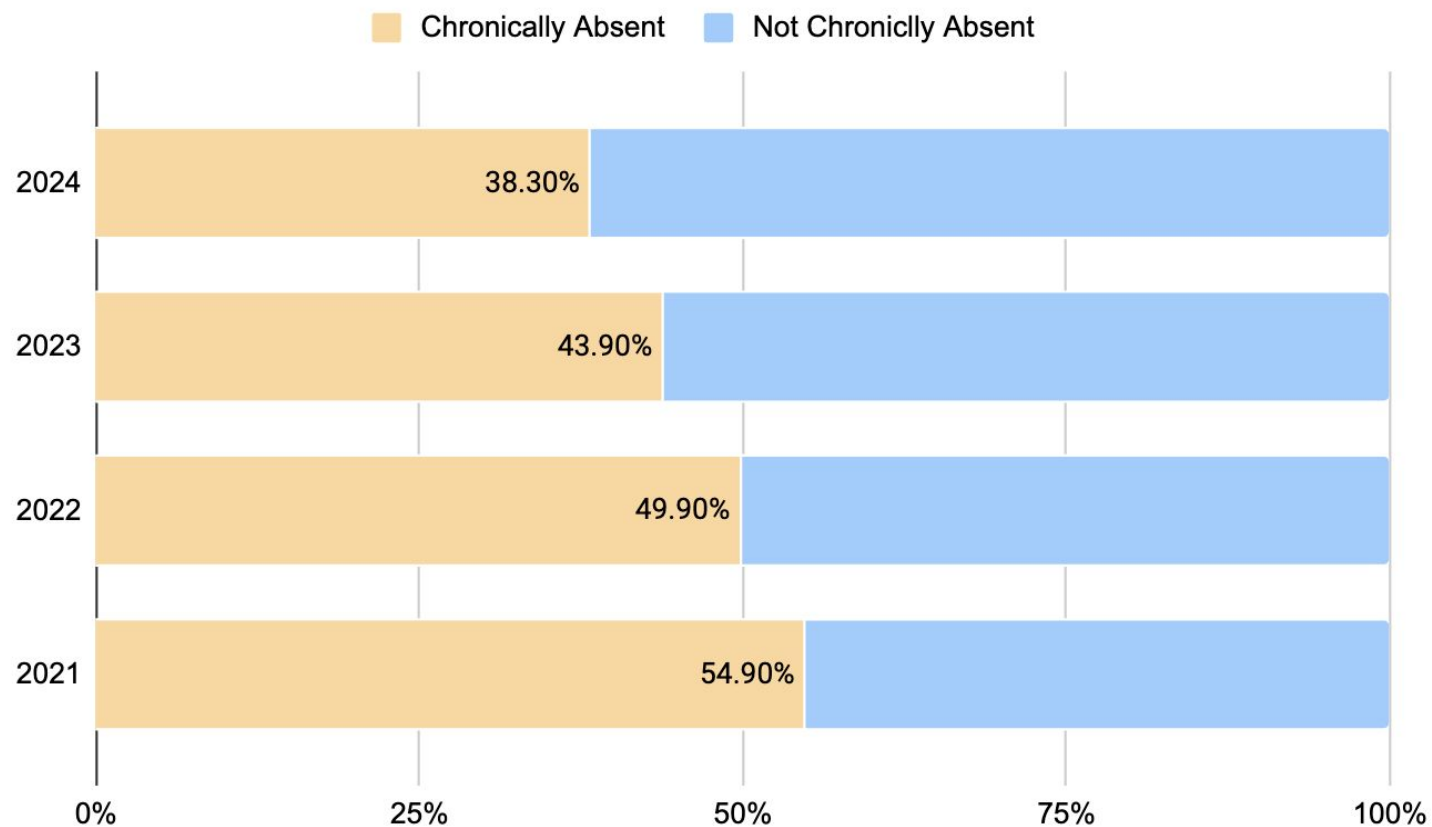
Every Student
Deserves a Champion

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism: West Virginia's Comprehensive Approach

West Virginia
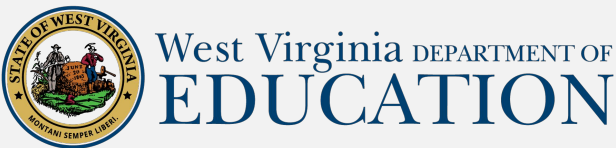
Group	Population
Enrollment	201,101
Number of Schools	617
FRPL	113,337
Disabilities	43,710
ELL	2,119

Chronic Absenteeism 2022	Chronic Absenteeism 2023	Chronic Absenteeism 2024
29.1%	27.55%	23.53%

Race/ Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Multi-Racial	Pacific Islander	White
Population	155	8,063	1,357	4,895	9,193	103	177,335

STRIVE
WEST VIRGINIA

Our State Strategic Approach

- **S**trengthened Behavior Responses
- **T**argeted Assistance
- **R**egular Attendance
- **I**ncreased Achievement
- **V**alid Data Practices
- **E**mpowered Support Teams

Key Strategies

Continue and expand the West Virginia Attendance Collaborative Leadership Team and regional support meetings.

Communities In Schools site coordinators have attendance-focused goals aligned with school strategic plans.

Continue professional development on MTSS, including student connectedness, and begin recognizing schools for exemplary practices.

Communities In Schools

Our Mission: We surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Our Site Coordinators: Trained professionals who work with school administrators and staff to assess needs, develop a plan and build a team to provide supports to schools and students.

Our Work: The difference is "In". The site coordinator is in schools and an integral part of the school community and the students' lives.

Communities In Schools
Licensed Partner

WVDE CIS COORDINATORS/ REGIONAL SPECIALISTS
COUNTY CONTACTS
SITE COORDINATORS
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
2 PLANNING
3 INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS
4 MONITORING & ADJUSTING
5 EVALUATION
6 PROVEN SUCCESS

TIER 3: INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT
TIER 2: TARGETED PROGRAMS
TIER 1: SCHOOL-WIDE SERVICES

Unique to WV's implementation of CIS.

STRIVE & Communities In Schools

Attendance-Focused Strategies

- Schoolwide Attendance Goals
- Student Needs Assessment
  - Identify cause of absenteeism
    - Root Causes - Attendance Works
  - CIS Student Engagement Survey
- Plan Student Supports
  - Intervention Menu of Tiered Supports
  - Robust Tier I Supports
- Support Team Framework

Community Connection

- *Share the Success of CIS* – September Campaign
- Stakeholder Survey
- Resource Mapping

Communities In Schools
Licensed Partner

Jefferson County High School

- **"Make Each Connection Count"**
- JCS High School Attendance Collaborative
- "Just Because You're Here Today"
  - Selfie Stations
  - Concerts
  - Speakers
- Grade-Level Small Group Meetings

Capon Bridge Middle School

- Daily Follow-Up Protocol – Immediate Response System
- Attendance Ambassadors

Q & A

- Back-to-school packets

- Use technology and awareness campaigns

- Staff and parent meetings

- Peer to peer messaging

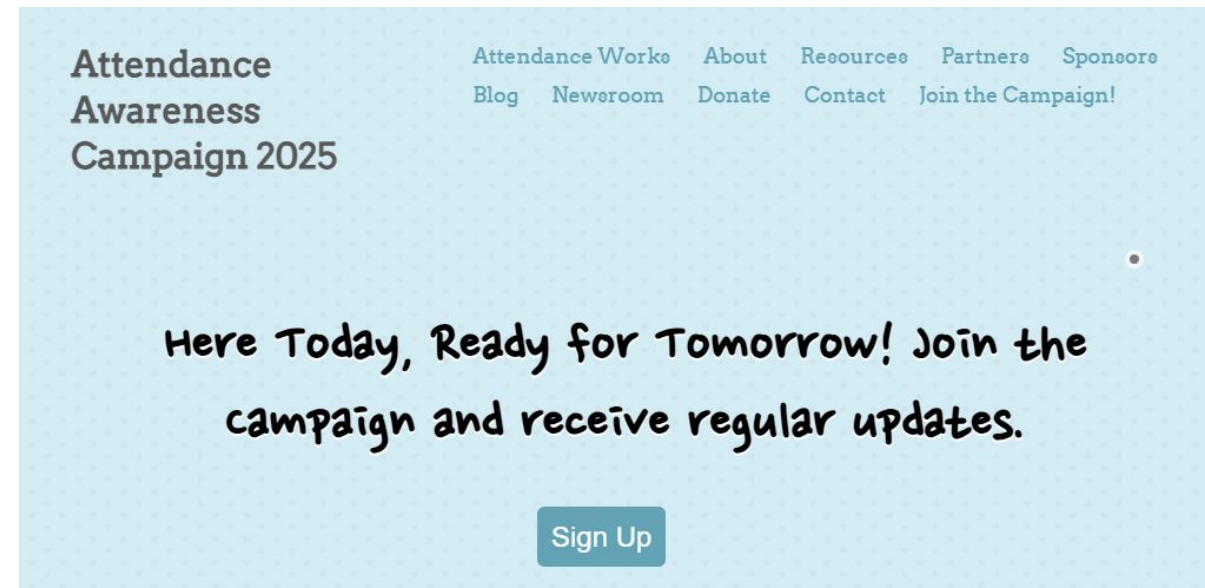- Catalyze a conversation with the local health department

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/

Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

✔ **Proclaim September Attendance Awareness Month building off our sample proclamation**

✔ **Share our free social media materials with local districts!**

✔ **Follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X**

✔ **Add an AAC badge to your signature line website or materials**

✔ **Access the Count Us In! toolkit**

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025

Attendance Works   About   Resources   Partners   Sponsors
Blog   Newsroom   Donate   Contact   Join the Campaign!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow! Join the campaign and receive regular updates.

Sign Up

Join 44,000+ listserv members and receive updates:
www.awareness.attendanceworks.org

Attendance Works

Webinar Recording

We will post a recording of this webinar
within 72 hours:

http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/

Feedback

Please let us know how we can improve:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AAC-August-2025

Thank you!

Attendance Works

And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

Heising-Simons Foundation
Overdeck Foundation
And individual donors