Belonging and Engagement: The Keys to Showing Up

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2023 – Webinar 1 of 4
Welcome!

S. Kwesi Rollins  
Vice President for Leadership & Engagement  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
Chair, Advisory Board, Attendance Works

Hedy N. Chang  
Executive Director  
Attendance Works
About the Institute for Educational Leadership

IEL acts as a catalyst and capacity builder at the intersection of education, community collaboration and workforce development to effectively promote equity and better opportunities for all children and youth. 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 and closes equity gaps 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
I. Welcome

II. Attendance Awareness Campaign and Key Concepts
   Kwesi Rollins, Vice President for Leadership & Engagement, IEL
   Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works

III. The Impact of the Pandemic
   ❖ Pamela Cantor, MD, Founder and Senior Science Advisor, Turnaround for
     Children

IV. Practitioner Panel:
   ❖ Cherri Rowe, Chief Program Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Dallas, TX
   ❖ Jimmy Gere, Attendance Counselor, Tacoma Public Schools, WA
   ❖ Audrey Wilson, Dean of Students, Oakland High School, Tacoma Public Schools, WA

V. Closing Reflections & Resources
Convening Partners
AAC 2023!

See the full list of national and state campaign partners here: https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/partners-2/
Theme for 2023!

Showing Up Together!

2023 Attendance Awareness Campaign

Showing Up Together!

2023 Attendance Awareness Campaign
Attendance Awareness Campaign 2023
Webinar Series

Webinar 1  Belonging & Engagement: The Keys to Showing Up,
Thursday, March 30 2023: 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30pm ET

Webinar 2  Relationships All Year Round: Nurturing Showing Up
(working title)  Wednesday, May 10, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30pm ET

Webinar 3  A Healthy Return to School: Ensuring Showing Up
Wednesday, August 9, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30pm ET

Webinar 4  Bright Spots: Sustain Engagement and Attendance,
Wednesday, September 27, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30pm ET

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

Note: Each session is accompanied by a discussion guide that can be used for webinar parties.
2023 Theme: Showing Up Together

Selected Key Messages

❖ Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging is fundamental to improving student attendance and engagement.

❖ Students are more likely to attend school if they feel safe, connected and supported.

❖ A positive, problem-solving approach driven by data will improve attendance.

❖ When the whole community collaborates with families and schools, we can overcome barriers to attendance and engagement.
Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors for this Webinar!

**Kaiser Permanente** Thriving Schools brings together extensive health care expertise and partnerships with nationally recognized and trusted organizations to support schools in becoming a beacon of health in their community.

**RaaWee K12** provides a highly robust collaboration platform where school districts implement best practices for tracking students’ attendance and managing interventions.
Together, we have the opportunity to truly change the life trajectory for millions of students.

Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages
What is chronic absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent 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).
Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truancy</th>
<th>Chronic Absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▲ Counts ONLY unexcused absences</td>
<td>▪ Counts ALL absences (excused, unexcused &amp; suspensions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules</td>
<td>▪ Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions</td>
<td>▪ Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Cultivates family &amp; student engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chronic absence is a **leading** indicator and a **cause** of educational inequity.
Chronic Absence Trends for the United States

- Increases are occurring in tandem with significant drops in achievement.
- Chronic absence is higher than ever, especially in early elementary and high school.
- Early data from 2022–23 (not shown in figure) indicate rates remain high.

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent Likely Doubled Nationwide Since 2018-2019

- 2017-18: 16%
- 2018-19: 16.2%
- 2019-20: 11.9%
- 2020-21: 20.5%
- 2021-22: 30%

[Graph showing percentage trends over school years]
Chronic Absenteeism in Ohio by Grade
## Kindergarten Chronic Absence in California SY 2021-22
(40.4% or 198,866 kindergartners statewide)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race / Ethnicity</th>
<th>Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment</th>
<th>Chronic Absenteeism Count</th>
<th>Chronic Absenteeism Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>22,748</td>
<td>11,912</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>2,054</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>46,522</td>
<td>10,683</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>9,333</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>274,298</td>
<td>131,532</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>99,722</td>
<td>27,921</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>24,911</td>
<td>7,842</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>10,635</td>
<td>3,898</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reducing chronic absence requires addressing underlying challenges

### Barriers
- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Etc. and many more!

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

### Disengagement
- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive 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
- Drawn to low-wage job vs. 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
- Sporadic absences aren’t a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don’t count as absence
Take an all-hands-on-deck “team” approach to rebuilding positive conditions for learning in our schools
Offer a multi-tiered approach that begins with prevention

Working across silos is essential!

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/
Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

**Reason for Absence**

**Disengaged**
- Assign a peer group mentor
- Create an individualized learning plan
- Create fun learning experiences (art, music, STEM, etc.)
- Offer alternatives for credit recovery

**Health & Anxiety**
- Address concerns about health and safety
- Expand access to school based health/mental health services
- Help students and families build regular routines
- Offer small groups to teach calming skills (in school or after school)

**Family/Work Responsibilities**
- Identify alternate caregivers
- Provide a modified schedule
- Negotiate work schedules with local employers

**Transportation Barriers**
- Walking School Bus
- Free municipal bus passes
- Carpools/Van Pools
The Challenge and Opportunity

Students who suffered most in the pandemic need:

- experiences that nurture the joy of learning,
- receive support over time,
- expanded amount of time in enriching environments that support socialization and learning.

And, we need to use data to notice where our effort are succeeding or need improvement and to identify which students and families would benefit from extra support to show up.

Concept developed in partnership with Pam Allyn, CEO of Dewey
Current Opportunity:
Use Expanded Learning to Increase Engagement, Attendance and Achievement

Assess Need
- Use **chronic absence data** to inform which schools most need summer learning and expanded learning programs

Prioritize Students
- Consider **chronic absence data** when identifying which students (individuals and groups) would benefit from engaging summer learning experiences.

Monitor Data During Summer
- Find out what motivates attendance and prevents students from getting to school in order to design meaningful supports and interventions.

Track Data Into School Year
- Examine what happens to attendance during the school year; Leverage expanded learning to address chronic absence.
Key Ingredients of Systemic Change to Reducing Absenteeism

- District
- Capacity Building
- Actionable Data
- Positive Engagement
- Strategic Partnerships
- Adequate, Equitable Resources
- Shared Accountability
- Schools
- Students & Families
- Community
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- Capacity Building
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- Positive Engagement
- Strategic Partnerships
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- Community
Dr. Pamela Cantor

Pamela Cantor, MD
Founder and Senior Science Advisor
Turnaround for Children
Questions

1. How has the stress, anxiety and trauma of the past three years affected students’ learning, well-being and connection to schools?

2. What can schools and communities do to help students recover from these challenges so that students learn, thrive and show up to school?

3. What is your guidance for staff about how to advise and partner with families who have also been through challenging times?
Resources

- pamelacantormd.com
- turnaroundusa.org/toolbox
- k12.designprinciples.org
- turnaroundusa.org/podcast
- psychologytoday.com/us/blog/all-kids-thriving
Panelists

Jimmy Gere  
Attendance Counselor  
Whole Child Department  
Tacoma Public Schools

Audrey Wilson  
Dean of Students  
Oakland High School  
Tacoma Public Schools

Cherri Rowe  
Chief Program Officer  
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Dallas
1. Tell us about your community and how you know about the attendance challenges and needs of your students and families?

2. What are key strategies you’ve used to respond to those challenges and re-engage and connect students to school and the joy of learning during the school year?
Tacoma - Pierce County - Washington

Our Community
- 2020 Population 220,536 – 3rd Largest City
- Top 1% Statewide in Diversity
- 28,688 Students in 57 Schools (70% BIPOC)
- 41% Economically Disadvantaged
- Crime & Homelessness: 2-3 x National Avg.
- 55% Graduation Rate (2010) “dropout factory” – USA

Tacoma Public Schools - Whole Child
- Safe, Healthy, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged -“Whole Child Initiative” (2012)
- 90% Graduation Rate (2022) Historic High
- Proactive Approach to Attendance – SEL
- School Climate & Culture
- Restorative Practices & Circles
- Affinity Groups, Clubs, Mentoring
Building Level Attendance Teams - collaboration with Attendance Counselor on Special Assignment & PSESD

- Engagement, training, and guidance
- 6-week goal planning to assess and monitor progress
- Identifying and developing Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports
- Utilizing data to guide intentional outreach
- Establishing systems for responding to chronic absenteeism
Attendance Barriers

What are the most common reasons you are absent? (check all that apply)

- I didn’t get enough sleep: 202
- I didn’t have a ride to school: 77
- I didn’t wake up on time: 195
- I feel too much stress: 219
- I just don’t care: 79
- I’m avoiding a class: 86
- I’m avoiding a classmate or bully: 42
- I’m sick: 542
- I have a dentist or doctor appointment: 341
- I have a job: 26
- I have to take care of a family member: 72
- I was suspended: 13
- Something hard happened at home: 125
- Sometimes I don’t have clean clothes: 28
- Other: 124
Attendance Counselor on Special Assignment provided guidance and support to Advisors at Elementary and Middle School sites for liftoff of Club Connect, a safe space for students to feel seen, heard, and accepted while learning about the importance of school attendance and developing a schoolwide Belonging Campaign.
Native American Student Clubs

Collaboration with Indian Education Department to establish and support clubs at 6 secondary sites to focus on attendance, belonging, and inclusion: First Creek, Foss, IDEA, Lincoln, Mt. Tahoma, SOTA
Supported establishment, liftoff, and ongoing guidance of student clubs that recognize inclusion, diversity, and belonging as key components to acknowledging the Whole Child and promoting attendance & engagement.
Supported formation of student interest clubs at Oakland High School to build a sense of belonging and connection while embedding awareness around attendance and promoting student engagement.
Our School

- 117 students enrolled
- 37.9% chronic absenteeism
- 28% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, 13% Multi-Racial, 62% White
- Alternative schedule
- High staff retention rate
- Culture is family centered and focused on relationship building.

Attendance Practices

Our Goal: To have each student connected with at least one staff member and/or program within our school.

- Attendance Team (Student Support Team)
- 3R Incentives: Respect, Resilience, Responsibility
- Grade Level Advisories
- Quarterly Celebration Assemblies and Dinners
- Community Partners
- Student-Driven Initiatives
Barriers to Coming to School

- Lack of Motivation
- Feel Overwhelmed
- Oversleeping
- Transportation
- Other
- Take Care of Family Member
- I am needed at home
- I come to school regularly

- 9th Grade
- 10th Grade
- 11th Grade
- 12th Grade
Barriers to Attendance

Access to a Washer & Dryer

- Some students at Oakland indicated that the reason they were missing school was because they **didn’t have any clean clothing to wear**
- This was an immediate **attendance barrier** impacting the academic engagement of students
- Using funds from the ESSER Grant, the Attendance Counselor on Special Assignment was able to coordinate the purchase and installation of a **new washer & dryer** for student use at Oakland
Add mentorship circles slide

Student Mentorship Program: Attendance & Engagement

Attendance Counselor on Special Assignment coordinated with nonprofit Journeymen to bring CIRCLES, a positive mentoring group, to students at Hilltop Heritage and Oakland featuring weekly in-school group meetups, engaging experiential learning activities, and healing centered approaches that boost mental wellness and self advocacy. In a safe, supportive, and empowering community of their peers, students explore the 7 CIRCLES themes of Compassion, Integrity, Resiliency, Community, Leadership, Equity & Service as they journey toward healthy adulthood.
BGCD Community Challenges

73% of youth surveyed stated that when something important goes wrong in my life, I just can’t stop worrying about it.

49% of youth surveyed stated that if I don’t understand something right away, I stop trying to understand.

38% of youth surveyed stated that when I have trouble doing something, I give up.

73% of youth surveyed stated that when something important goes wrong in my life, I try to keep people from finding out.

*Data Source: BGCA National Youth Outcome Initiative (2022 results)*
What Does This Mean?

- According to McKinsey & Co., students in Texas have experienced an average of 12 weeks of learning delay.
  - If students are struggling and not willing to seek help, they are more likely to want to skip school and/or dropout.
  - Decreased sense of competence and ability.

*Data Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (McKinsey & Co.)*
Key Strategies

• Surveyed parents to see what are their needs.
  • Return to normalcy
  • Creating excitement around learning and attending school.
• Create a fun and engaging environment that includes learning.
  • High yield learning activities
• Introduce fun learning events like Math Blazers, STEM camps and Book Clubs / Spelling Bees.
2. How are you planning to leverage the summer to re-engage students and spark the joy of learning?
Q & A
Join our EDMS Collaboration!

April 20 - Building or Improving Your Strategic Plan for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

Catch Up on PLANNING FOUNDATIONS in EDMS SUMMIT ARCHIVES: [http://www.everydaymatterssummit.org/summitarchives](http://www.everydaymatterssummit.org/summitarchives)

- Identifying and Targeting Barriers and Student Groups
- Building Winning Attendance Teams: Team-Based Approach to Attendance Improvement
- Aggregating and Disaggregating Attendance Data for Actionable Insights and Planning
- Creating Targeted Interventions for Students with Higher Degree of Absenteeism
- Finding Funding for Implementing Attendance Tracking & Improvement Technology

EDMS 6-Part Event Series Wrap-Up
Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

✔ Download our free social media materials and share with local districts

✔ Proclaim September Attendance Awareness Month building off our sample proclamation

✔ Join our listserv: 44,000+ members

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN

Join us for webinar #1, Belonging and Engagement: The Keys to Showing Up, March 30!

Sign up for updates:
www.awareness.attendanceworks.org
An easy on-ramp for developing or expanding a local or statewide attendance awareness campaign.

★ Tips
★ Templates
★ Proven strategies

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/
Opportunities to Promote AAC 2023!

Share the Attendance Awareness website: http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/

✔ Like us on Facebook

✔ Tweet using #schooleveryday  @attendanceworks

✔ Follow us on LinkedIn

✔ Add a badge to your signature line or materials
Mayors and other elected leaders, school boards and superintendents can signal the importance of school attendance by declaring that **September is Attendance Awareness Month**, especially while we are still experiencing impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic.

**We will update the template Proclamation for 2023 in May!**

Find it here: [https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/proclamations-2022/](https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/proclamations-2022/)
Other Resource from Attendance Works

Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.
A Toolkit for Communicating with Students and Families

**Step 1:** Explain Why Attendance Matters
**Step 2:** Cultivate A Culture of Engagement and Attendance for Students and Families
**Step 3:** Use Data to Determine Need for Intervention and Additional Support
**Step 4:** Engage Community Partners

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/
This new, 2-page handout answers key questions:

➔ What are the symptoms?
➔ When does anxiety become a problem?
➔ What can families do to support their child?
➔ How can schools and health providers help?
➔ Where can I find additional information?

https://www.attendanceworks.org/take-action/community-and-agency-partners/health-care-providers/
Register today!

2023 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference
June 7-9 | Philadelphia, PA

Feedback

Please let us know how we can improve:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AAC-March-2023

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

http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/
And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

Heising-Simons Foundation
And individual donors