



Belonging and Engagement: The Keys to Showing Up

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2023 – Webinar I of 4

March 30, 2023

www.attendanceworks.org



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

Agenda

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

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

Note: Each session is accompanied by a discussion guide that can be used for webinar parties.

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

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.



Support Attendance Works



Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages

Together, we have the opportunity to truly change the life trajectory for millions of students.

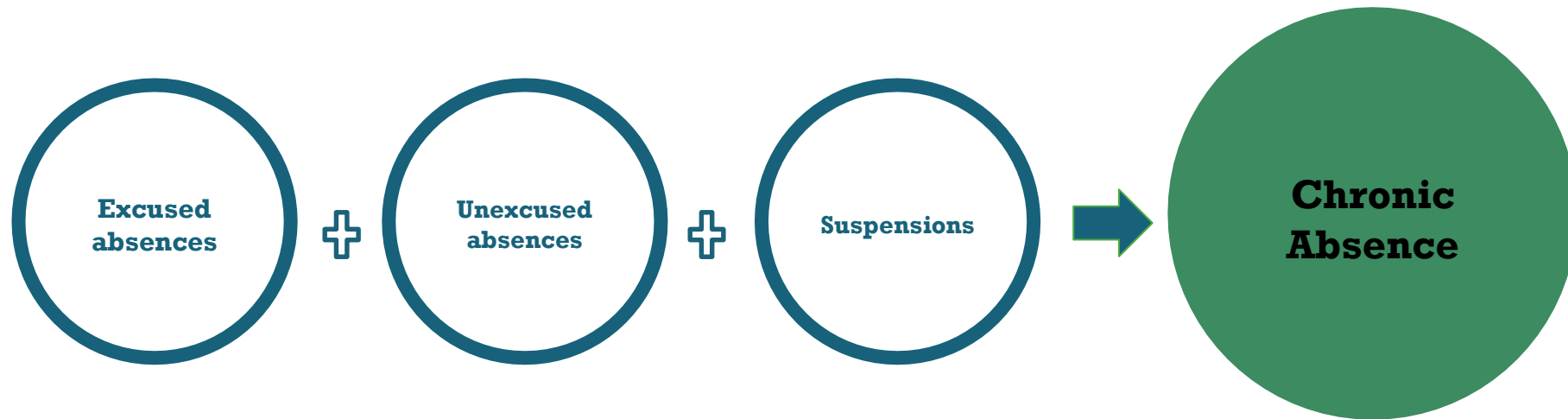
DONATE



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

Truancy

- ▲ Counts **ONLY** unexcused absences
- ▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- ▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions



Chronic Absence

- Counts **ALL** absences (excused, unexcused & suspensions)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement

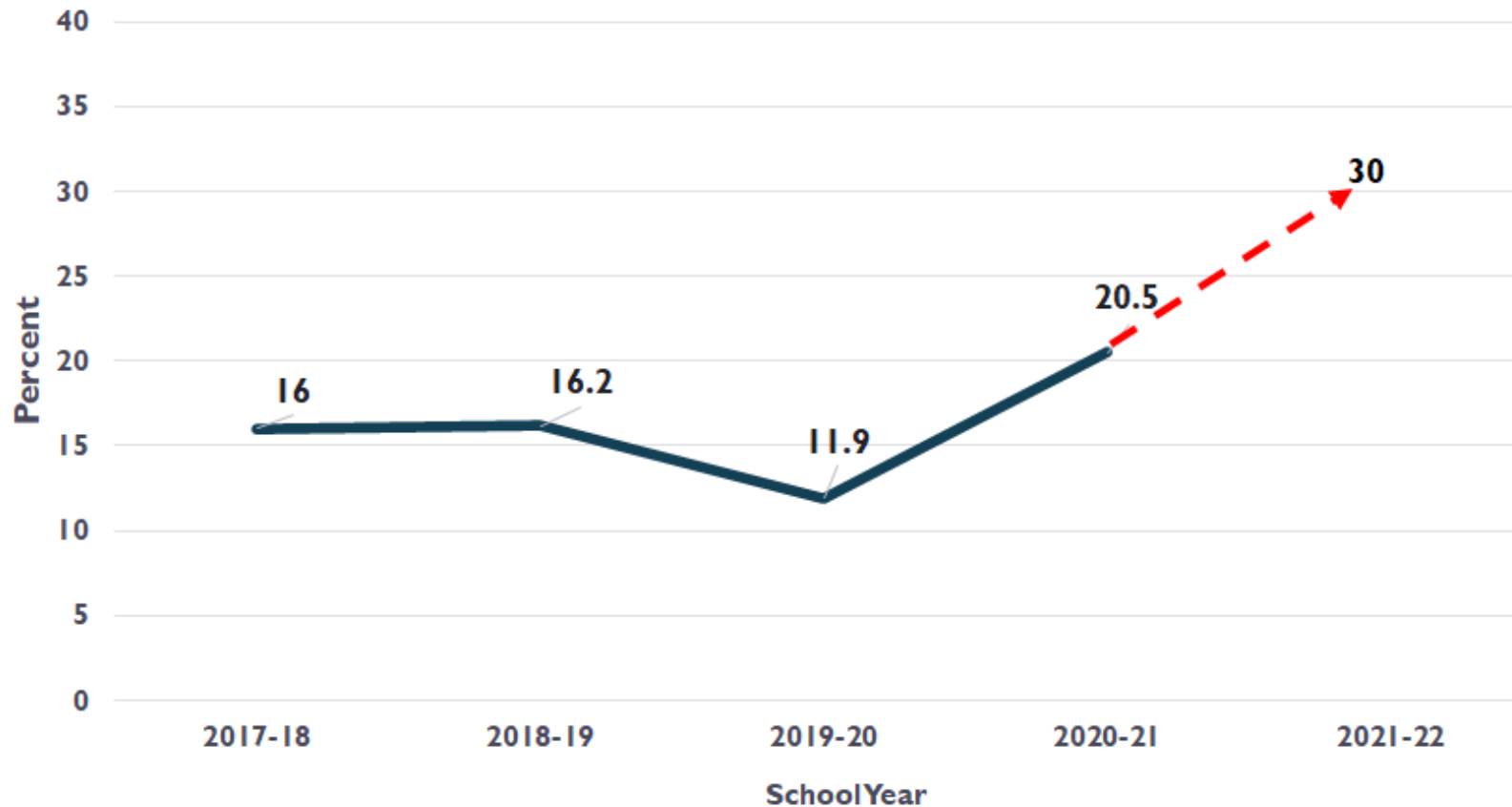


Chronic Absence & Equity

Chronic absence is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity

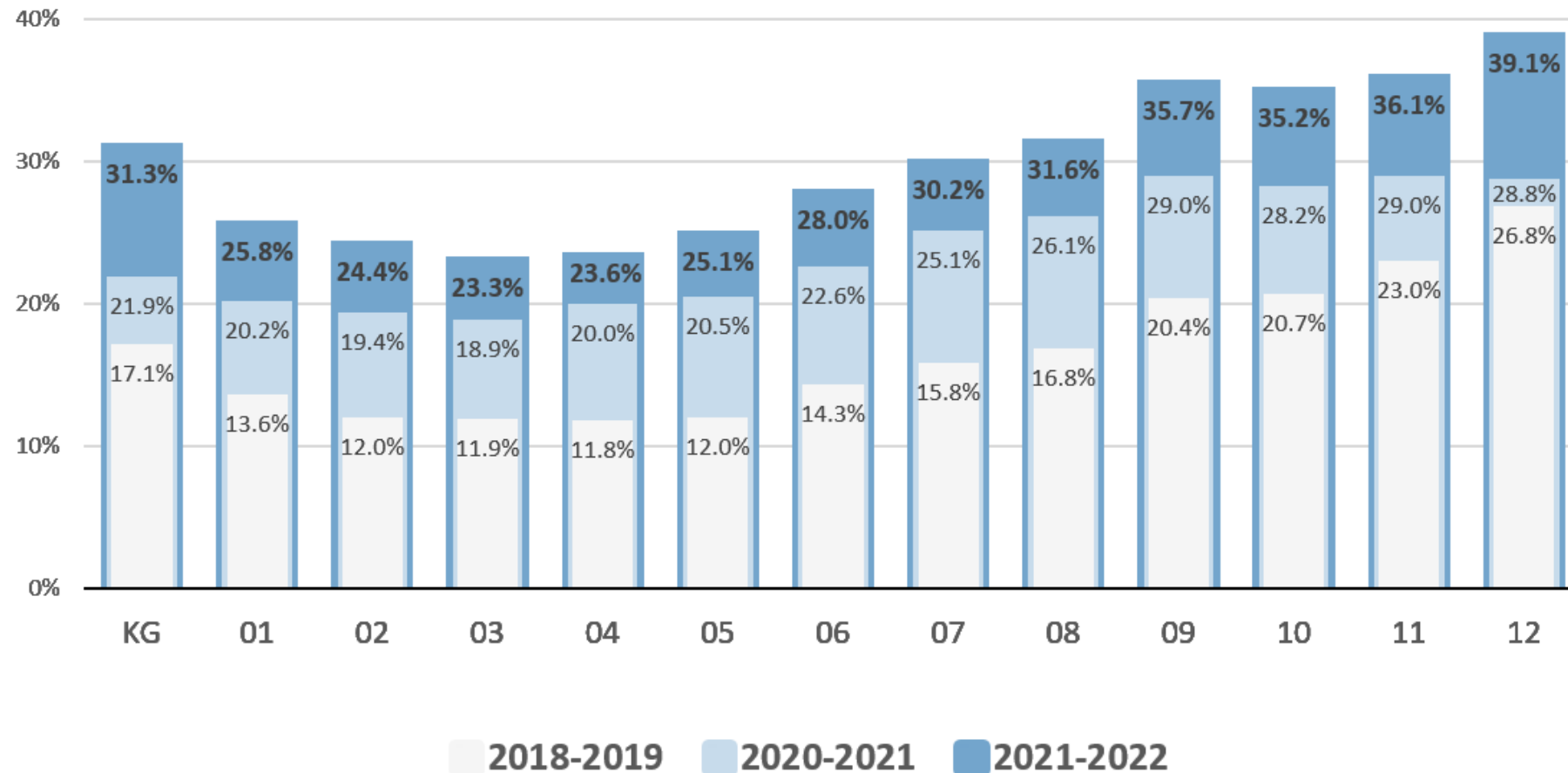
Chronic Absence Trends for the United States

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



- ✓ 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

Chronic Absenteeism in Ohio by Grade



Kindergarten Chronic Absence in California SY 2021-22 (40.4% or 198,866 kindergartners statewide)

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



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

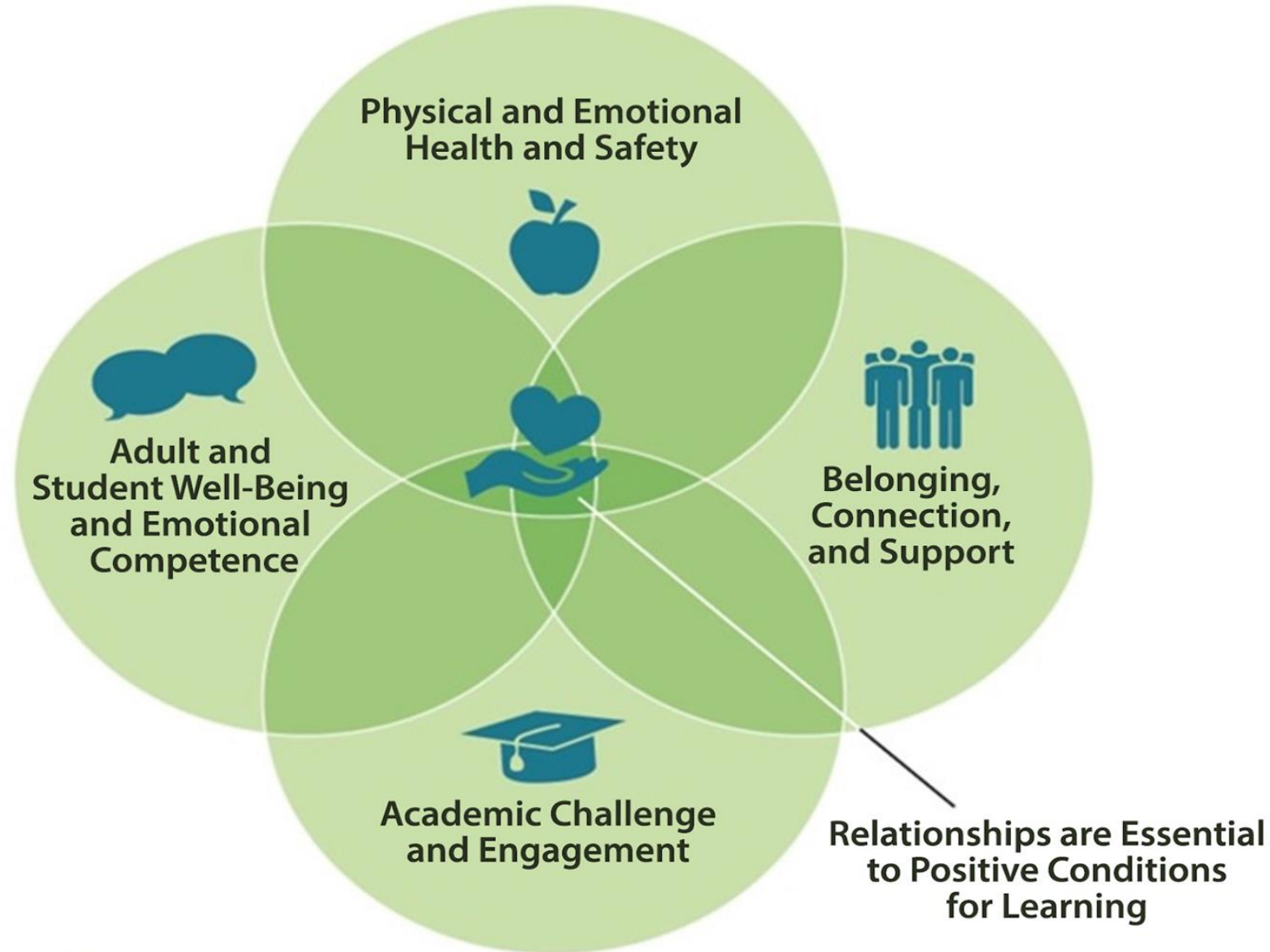
Disengagement

- 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

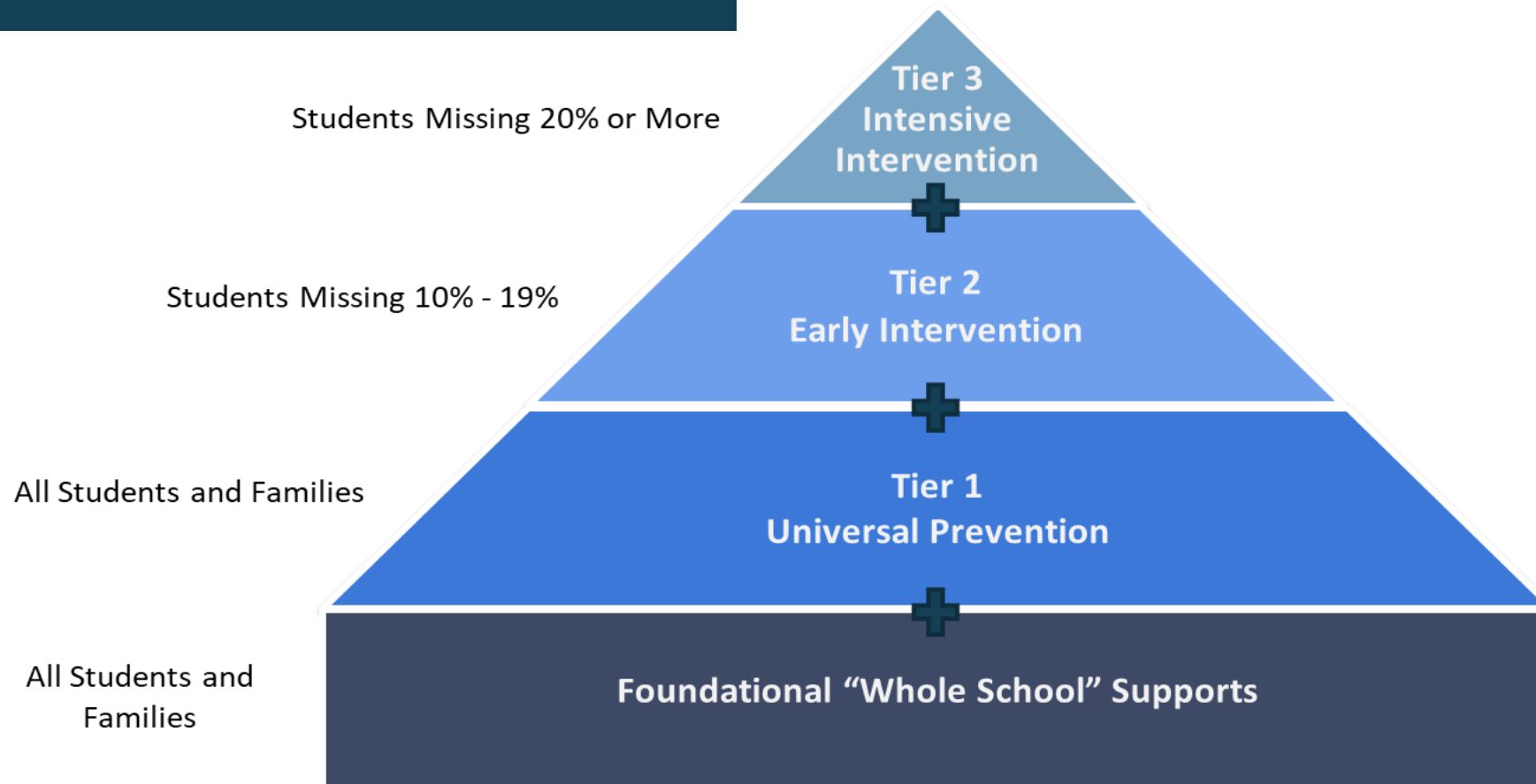
Take an all-hands-on-deck “team” approach to rebuilding positive conditions for learning in our schools





**Offer a multi-tiered approach
that begins with prevention**

**Working across
silos is essential!**



Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence		Possible Interventions
Disengaged	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify alternate caregivers• Provide a modified schedule• Negotiate work schedules with local employers
Transportation Barriers	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking School Bus• Free municipal bus passes• Carpools/Van Pools



The Challenge and Opportunity

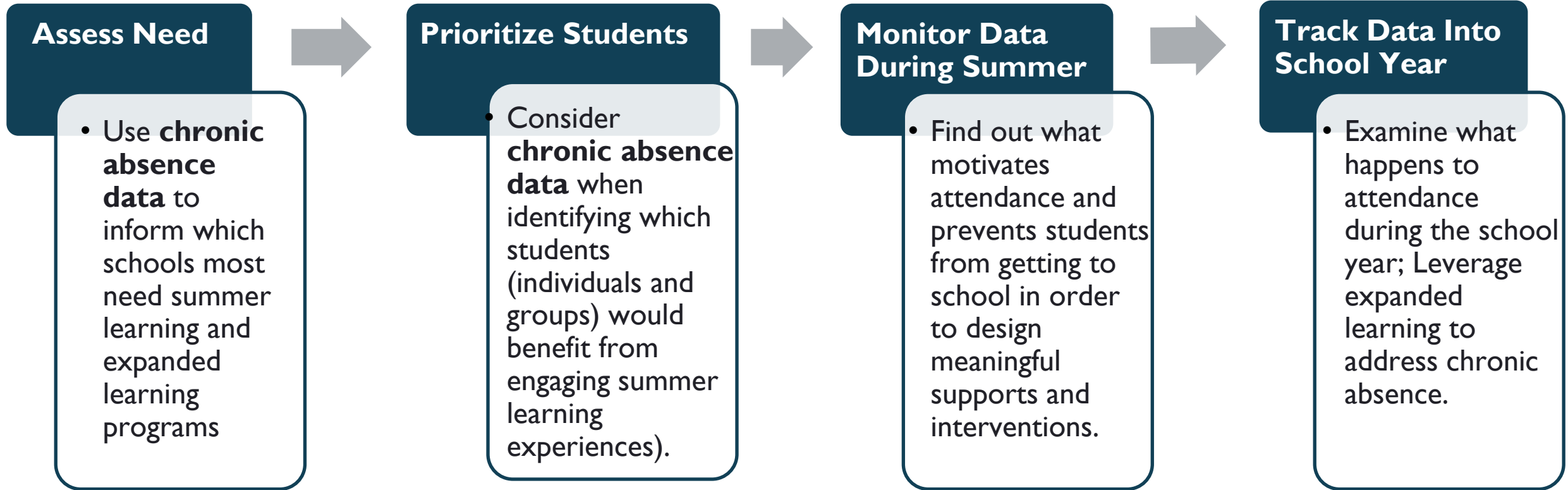
Concept developed in partnership
with Pam Allyn, CEO of Dewey

Students who suffered most in the pandemic need:

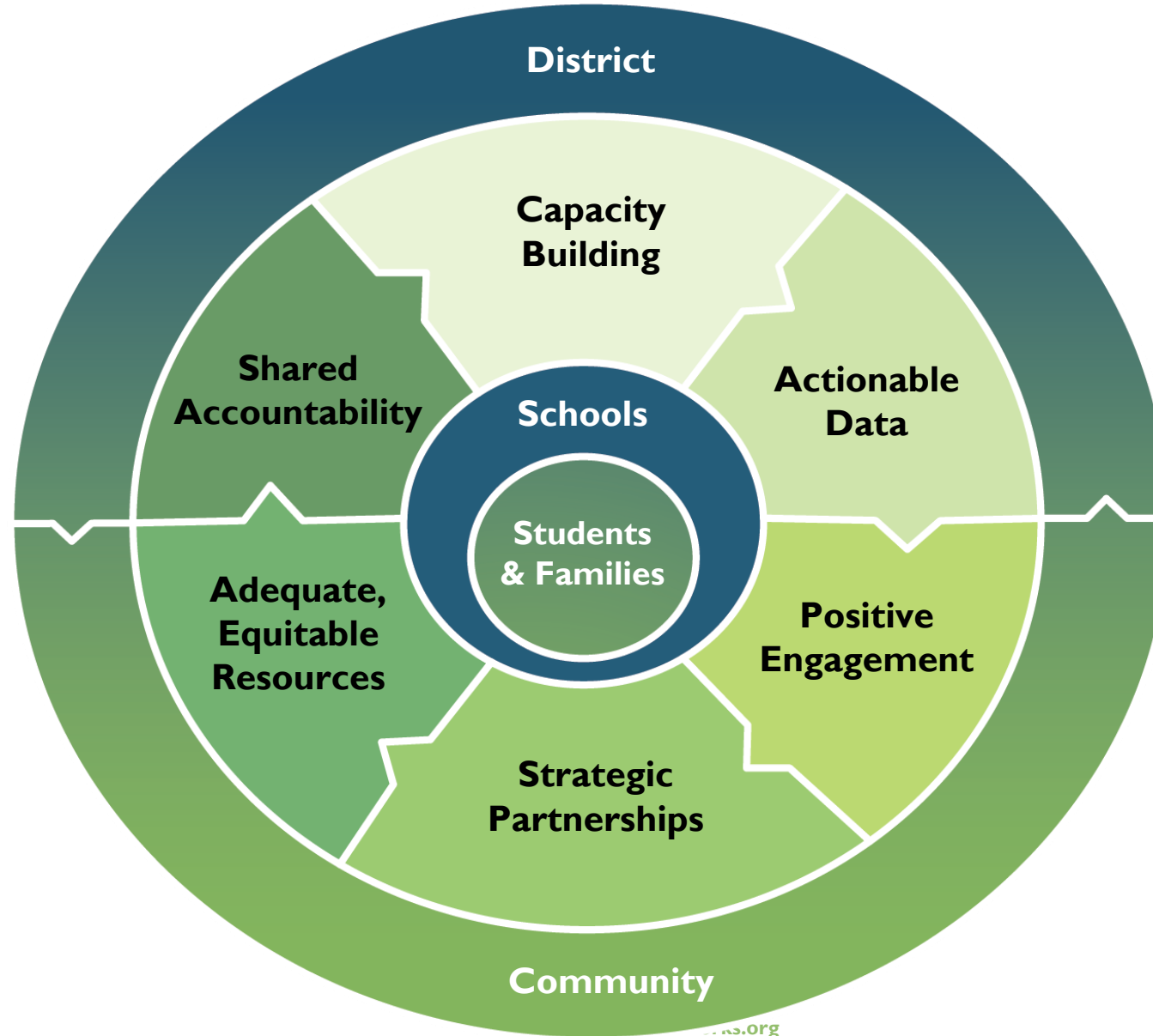
- experiences that nurture the joy of learning,
- receive support over time,
- expanded amount of time in enriching environments that support socialization and learning.

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.

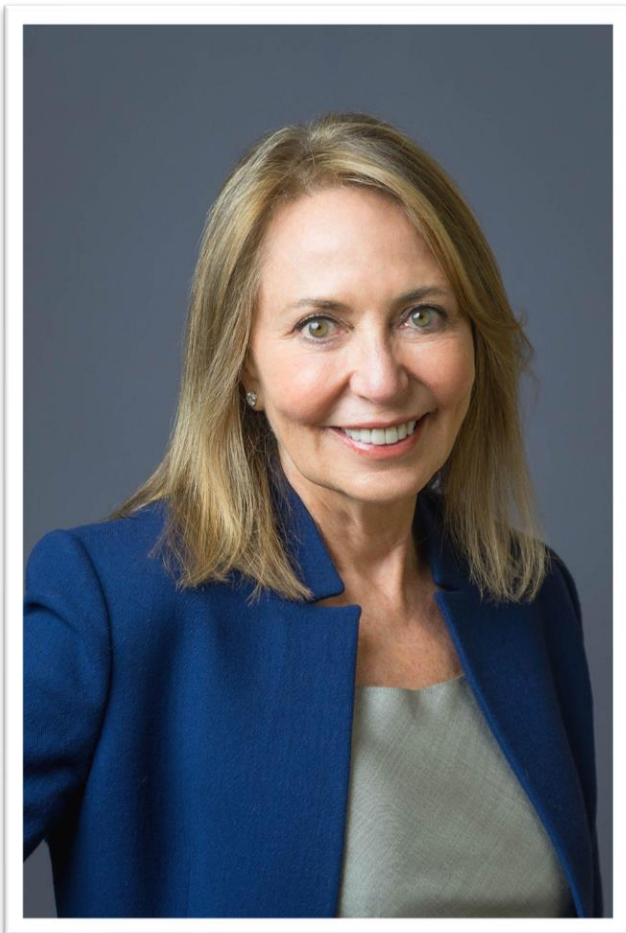
Current Opportunity: Use Expanded Learning to Increase Engagement, Attendance and Achievement



Key Ingredients of Systemic Change to Reducing Absenteeism



Dr. Pamela Cantor



Pamela Cantor, MD

Founder and Senior Science Advisor
Turnaround for Children

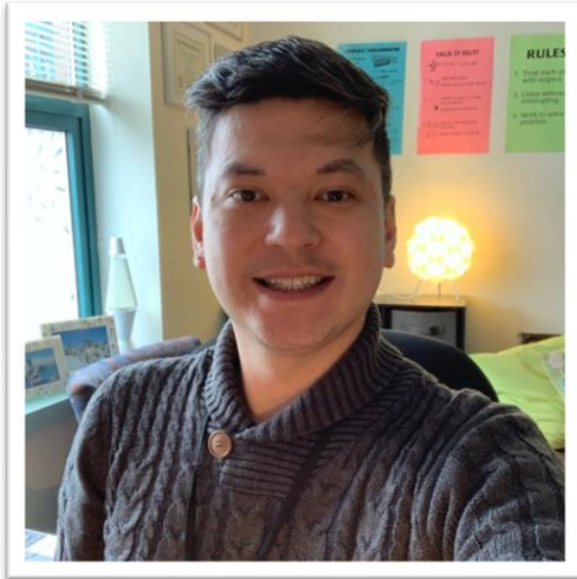
Questions

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



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

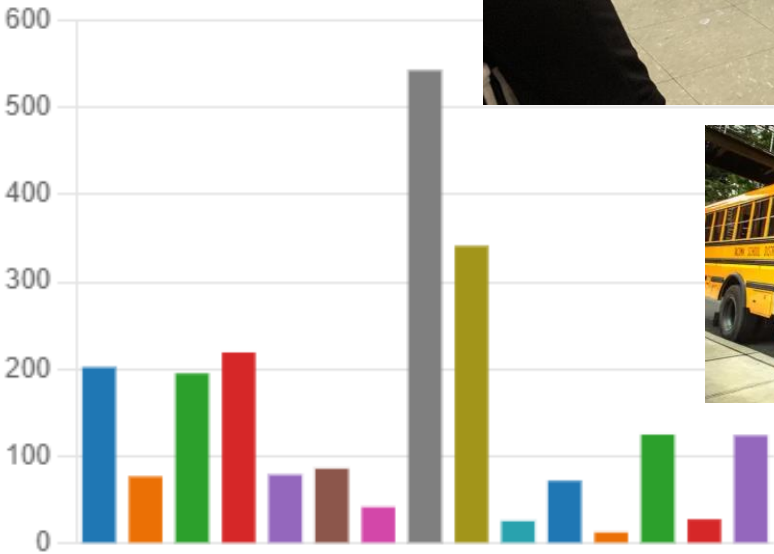
- Engagement, training, and guidance
- 6-week goal planning to assess and monitor progress
- Identifying and developing Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports
- Utilizing data to guide intentional outreach
- Establishing systems for responding to chronic absenteeism

Attendance Barriers

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

More Details

Flex Start	I didn't get enough sleep	202
WSB	I didn't have a ride to school	77
Alarm Clocks	I didn't wake up on time	195
Mindfulness	I feel too much stress	219
Affinity Groups	I just don't care	79
Mentorship	I'm avoiding a class	86
	I'm avoiding a classmate or bully	42
	I'm sick	542
	I have a dentist or doctor appoi...	341
Flex Start	I have a job	26
	I have to take care of a family m...	72
RJ Practices	I was suspended	13
Counseling	Something hard happened at h...	125
Hyg. Kits, W/D	Sometimes I don't have clean cl...	28
	Other	124



Club Connect: A Place of Belonging



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



A photograph of students on a yellow school bus. In the foreground, a student holds a rainbow flag. Another student in the background also holds a rainbow flag. The bus has a 'MERGE' sign above the door. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

LGBTQ+ Student Clubs

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.



Gaming Club – SEL Through Board Games

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

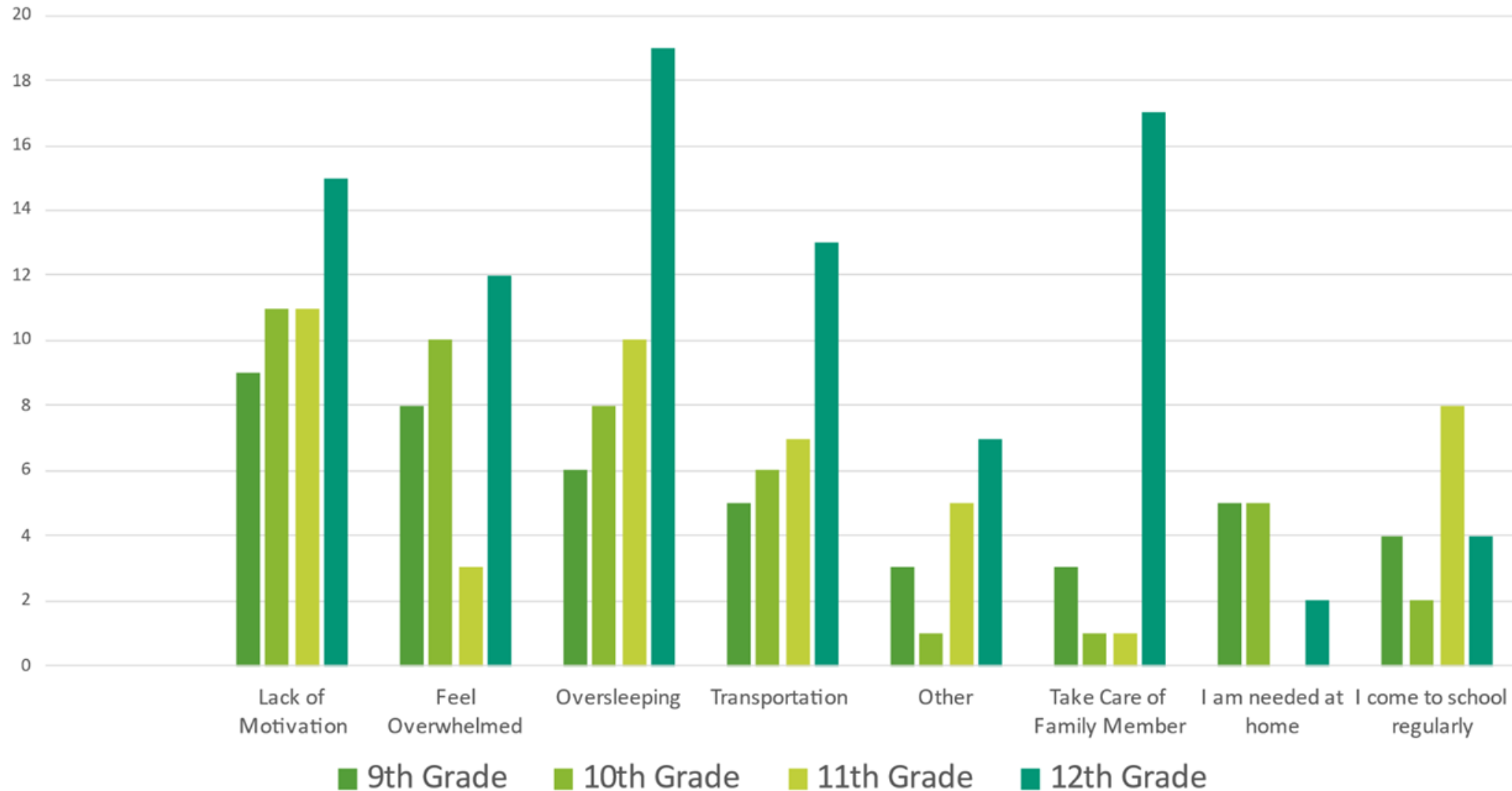
- 117 students enrolled
- 37.9% chronic absenteeism
- 28% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, 13% Multi-Racial, 62% White
- Alternative schedule
- High staff retention rate
- Culture is **family centered** and **focused on relationship building**.

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



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



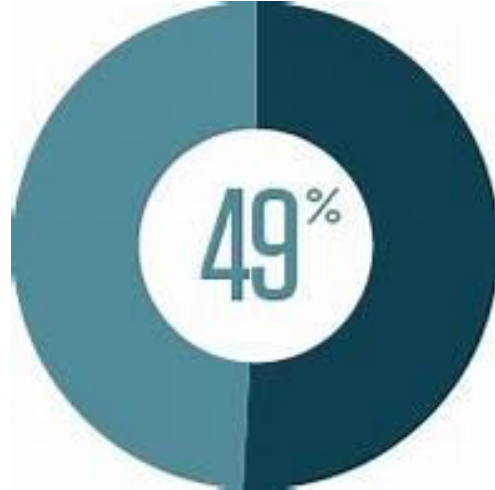
Student Mentorship Program: Attendance & Engagement

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



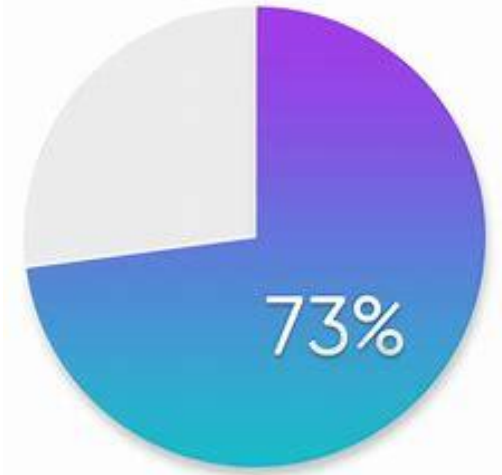
73% of youth surveyed stated that when something important goes wrong in my life, I just can't stop worrying about it.



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.

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.

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>

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

Attendance
Awareness
Campaign 2023

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

Sign up for updates:
www.awareness.attendanceworks.org



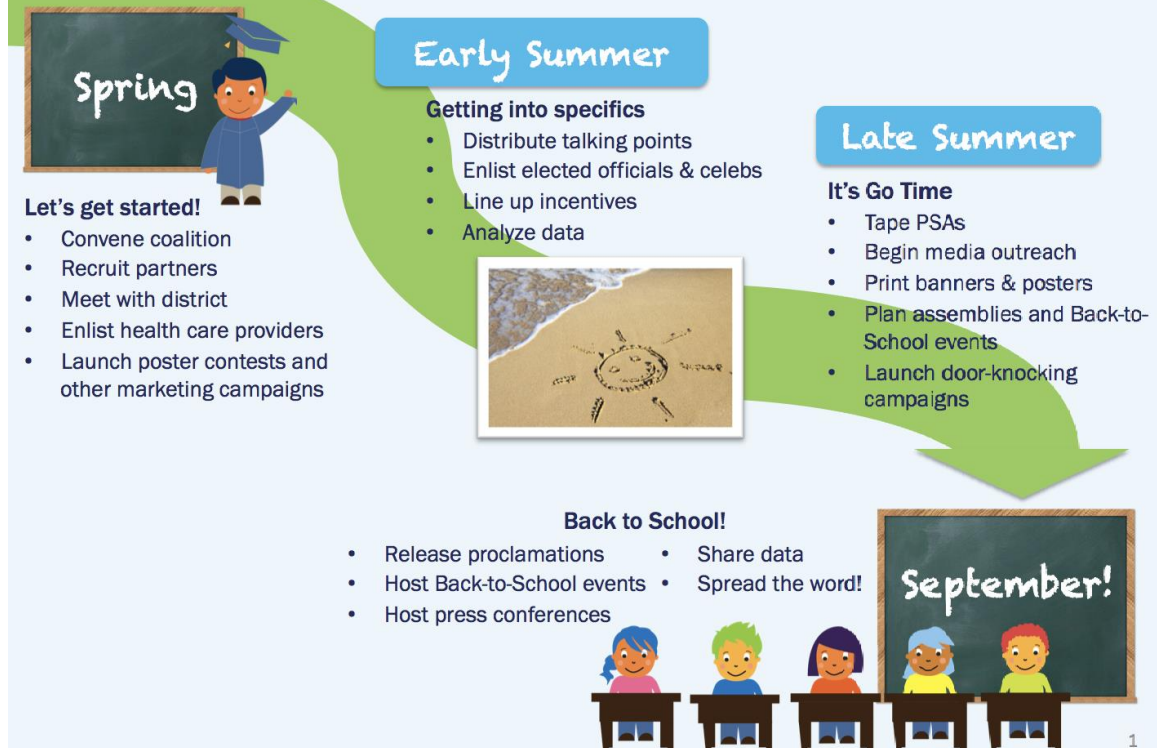
2023 Count Us In! Toolkit

An easy on-ramp for developing or expanding a local or statewide attendance awareness campaign.

- ★ **Tips**
- ★ **Templates**
- ★ **Proven strategies**

<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>

What to Do When: At a Glance





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





AAC 2023 Proclamation!



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/>



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/>



Parent Handout on Anxiety

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?



Is your child missing school due to anxiety?



Definition of anxiety: Feeling of fear and uneasiness about everyday situations.

If your child is suffering from anxiety, you are not alone. The good news is that in most situations, anxiety is normal and temporary. Anxiety becomes a concern if it persists - it can impact relationships with family, peers and teachers, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance/refusal. Addressing anxiety is important for a child's overall well-being, not just attendance.

In addition, if your child starts to complain of symptoms like a headache or stomach ache, it is important to **quickly determine** if this is related to anxiety or a physical illness which might require missing school. If the challenge is anxiety, then staying home may worsen the situation.



What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Persistent anxiety can present in many ways, making it difficult to recognize. Symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, and some children may keep worries to themselves or have difficulty explaining their feelings making it hard to identify symptoms. Anxiety symptoms can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Feeling tired, irritable or easily tearful
- Having trouble separating from parents
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Trouble getting out of bed or dressed for school
- Lack of appetite
- Trouble concentrating which may lead to difficulty starting tasks, problems with homework and falling behind in school
- Physical symptoms, including stomachaches and headaches
- Avoiding activities they previously enjoyed
- Negative or continuous thoughts that something bad is going to happen



Register today!

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



<https://bit.ly/csxfe23>



Feedback

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

Thank you!



Webinar Recording

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