



Supported: *Leveraging Attendance Data to Ensure Ongoing Success*

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2021 — Webinar 4 of 4

September 29, 2021

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

Joline Collins, Program Manager of Leadership Development, IEL

II. Attendance Awareness Campaign and Key Concepts

Kwesi Rollins, Vice President for Leadership & Engagement, IEL

Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works

III. Panel:

- ❖ **Maribel Childress**, Superintendent, Gravette School District, Arkansas
- ❖ **Todd Rogers**, Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School
- ❖ **Charlene Russell-Tucker**, Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education

IV. Closing Reflections

Kwesi Rollins, Vice President for Leadership & Engagement, IEL

Convening Partners AAC 2021



See the full list of national and state campaign partners here: <https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/partners-2/>



**Thank You to Our Corporate
Sponsors for this Webinar!**

**FRENCH
TOAST.**


EveryDay Labs™
Because every student deserves to learn every day.



KAISER PERMANENTE®

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2021 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 *(recorded)*

Committed: Supporting Attendance and Participation to the Very Last Day of School, Wednesday, April 14, 2021: 11am-12:30pm PT / 2pm–3:30pm ET

Webinar 2 *(recorded)*

Engaged: Using Summer to Connect with Students and Families, Wednesday, May 26, 2021: 11am-12:30pm PT / 2pm–3:30pm ET

Webinar 3 *(recorded)*

Welcomed: Embracing Students, Families and Educators in the New School Year, Wednesday, August 4, 2021: 11am-12:30pm PT / 2pm–3:30pm ET

Webinar 4 *(today)*

Supported: Leveraging Attendance Data to Ensure Ongoing Success, Wednesday, September 29, 2021: 11am-12:30pm PT / 2pm–3:30pm ET

2021 Theme: Rebound with Attendance!



Key Messages

1. **Chronic absence reflects and contributes to educational inequity.**
2. **Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging is fundamental to improving student attendance and engagement.**
3. **Students are more likely to attend school if they feel safe, connected and supported.**

2021 Theme: Rebound with Attendance!

Key Messages

4. **A positive, problem-solving approach driven by data will improve attendance.**
5. **Keeping students, families and school staff physically and emotionally healthy supports attendance.**
6. **When the whole community collaborates with families and schools, we can overcome barriers to attendance and engagement.**



Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute to Chronic Absence

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Etc. and many more!

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- 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
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits

Misconceptions

- Absences are only 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
- Suspensions don't count as absence

Chronic Absence is an Early Warning that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing Whether Classes are In Person, Distance or Blended





Back to School Letters

- Keep Safe
- Keep Healthy
- Keep Connected
- Keep Learning

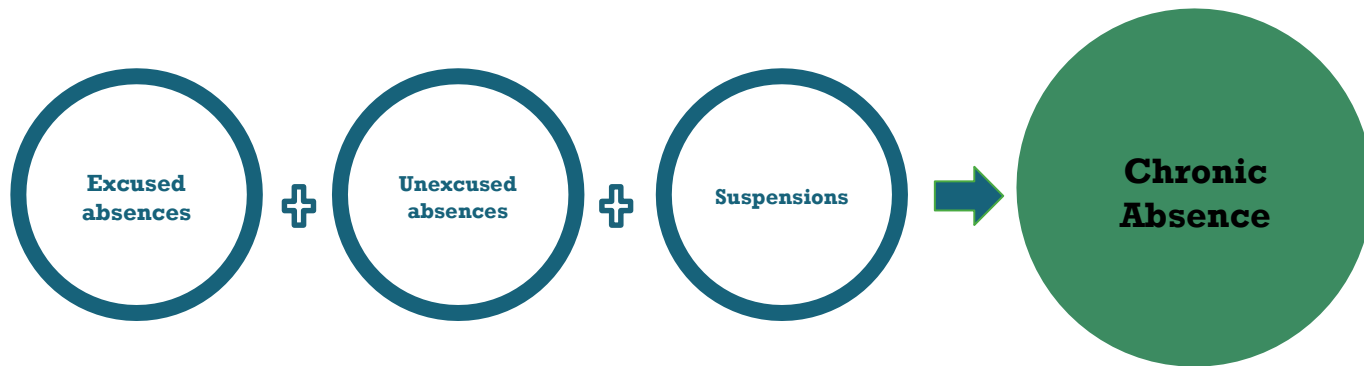
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/update-your-communications-with-families-for-back-to-school/>



Chronic Absence Measures Lost Opportunity to Learn

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).

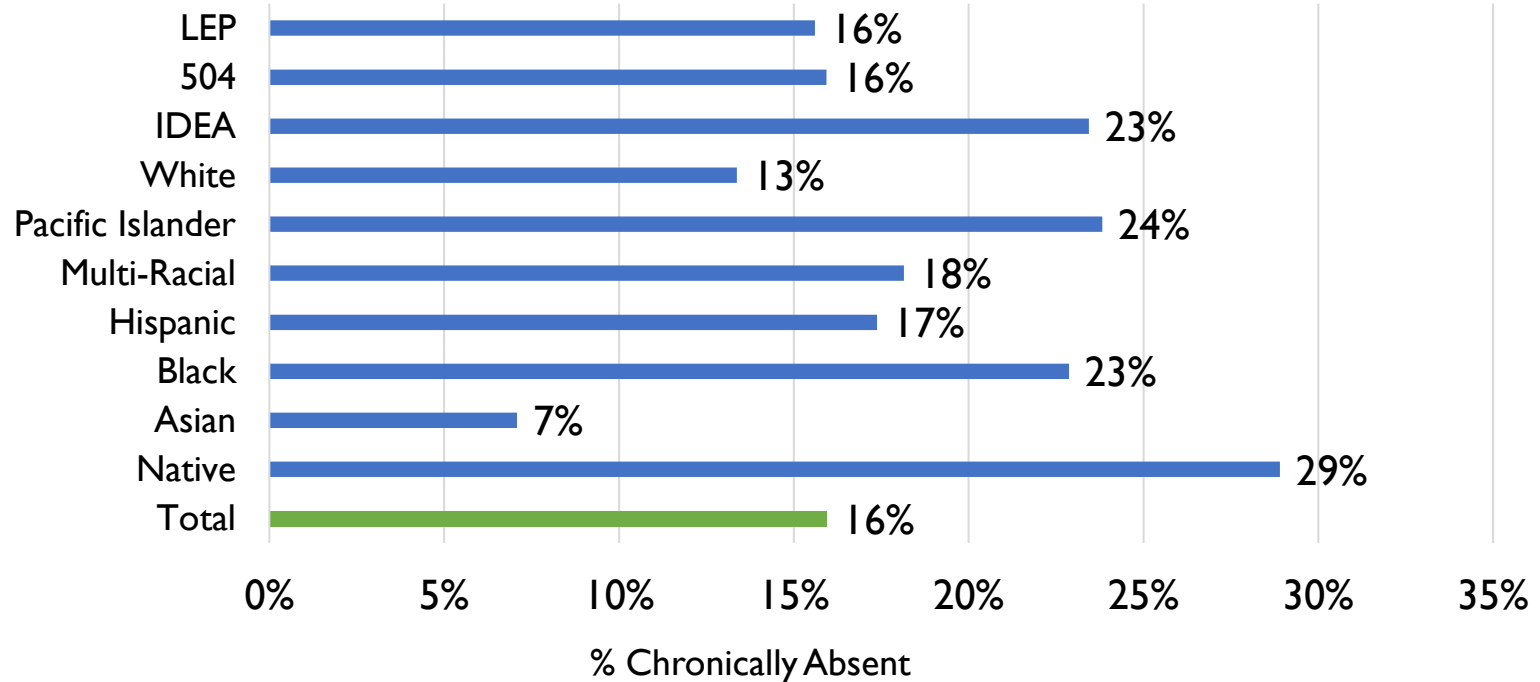


**What is the relationship
between absences and equity?**

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

National Data Show that the Impact of Chronic Absence is Disproportionate

National Chronic Absence Rates by Demographic Sub-group - 2017-18



Source: [Using Chronic Absence Data to Map Interrupted Schooling, Instructional Loss and Educational Inequity](#),

Attendance Works and Everyone Graduates, February 2021

www.attendanceworks.org

Present Danger:

Solving the Deepening Student Attendance Crisis

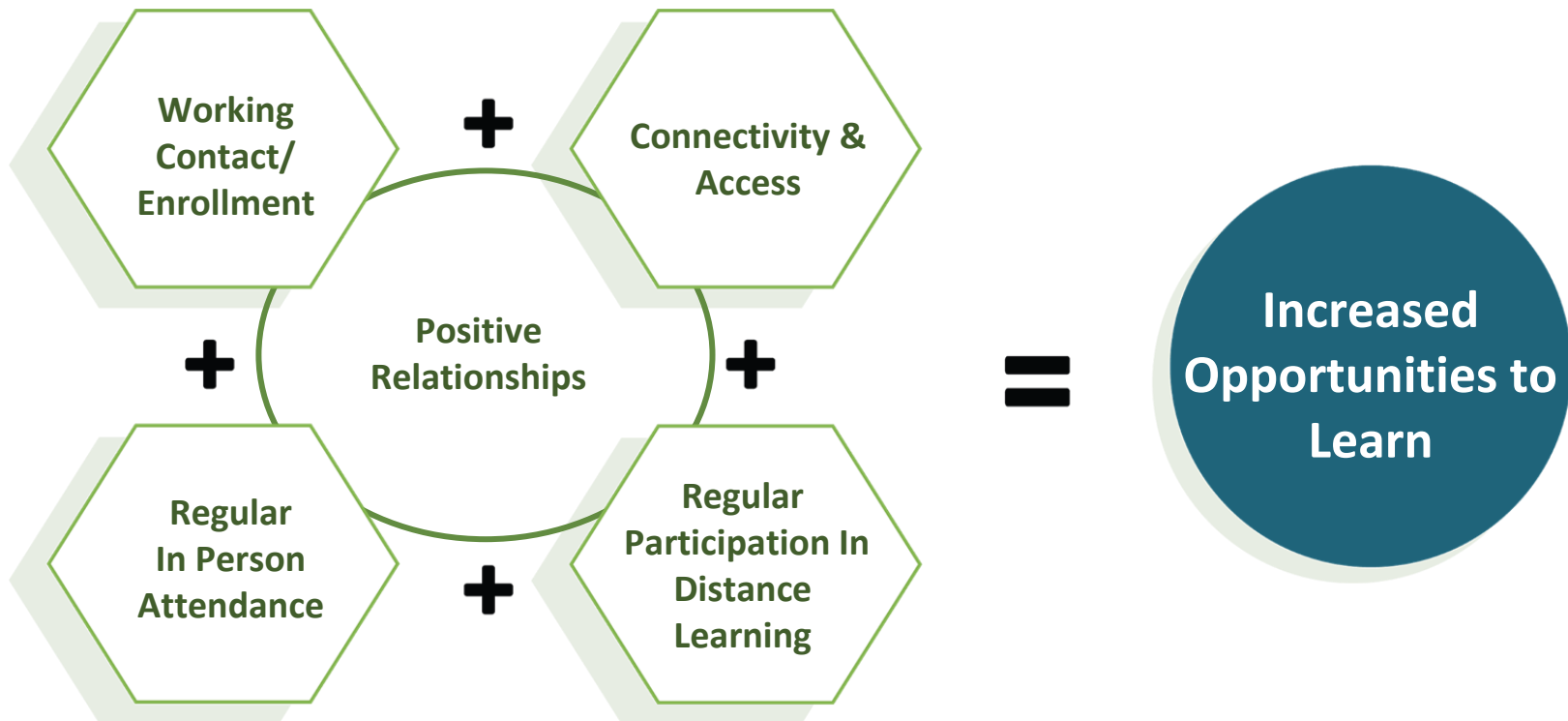
A new report from FutureEd takes a deep dive into 5 large school districts working with EveryDay Labs.

- Not only are more students missing school, they're missing many more days. The extent of "extreme chronic absenteeism," missing half the school year, is way up
- Absenteeism rates are rising faster among younger students
- Disadvantaged students see the biggest jumps in chronic absenteeism rates in every community
- Enrollment declines are most severe in the early grades
- Perfect attendance rates are also up, likely a mirage created by the changes in measuring attendance in the pandemic



<https://www.future-ed.org/present-danger-solving-the-deepening-student-absenteeism-crisis/>

Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn



Ensuring Attendance Requires A Team



The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

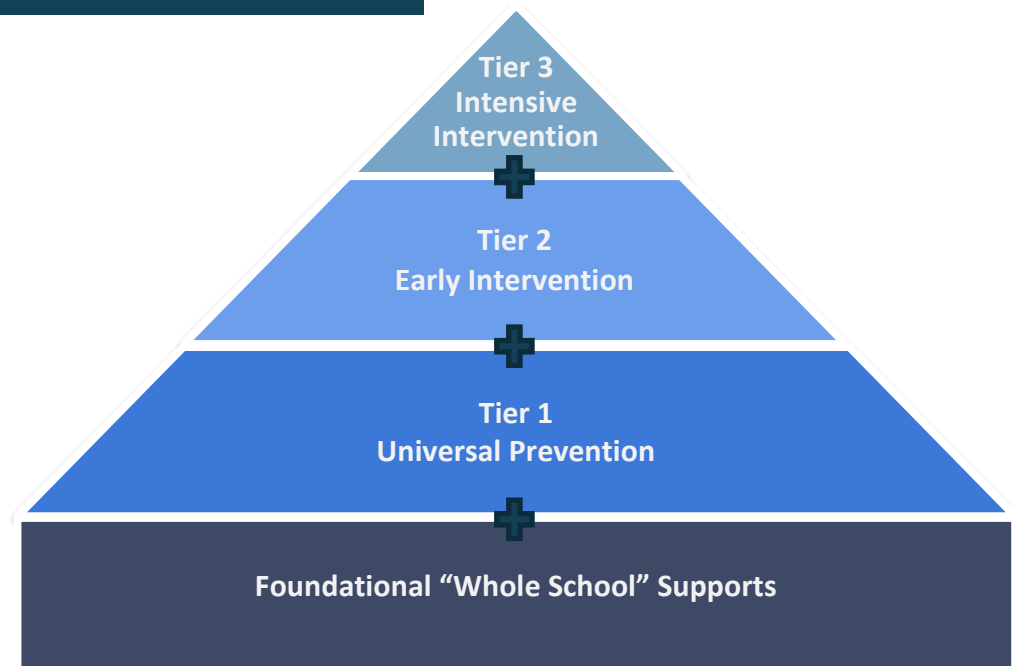
Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- * Nurse
- * Counselor
- * Social Worker
- * Administrative support staff
- * Special education staff
- * Teachers
- * Early education staff
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Pupil Personnel Workers
- * Child Welfare and Attendance Officers

Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



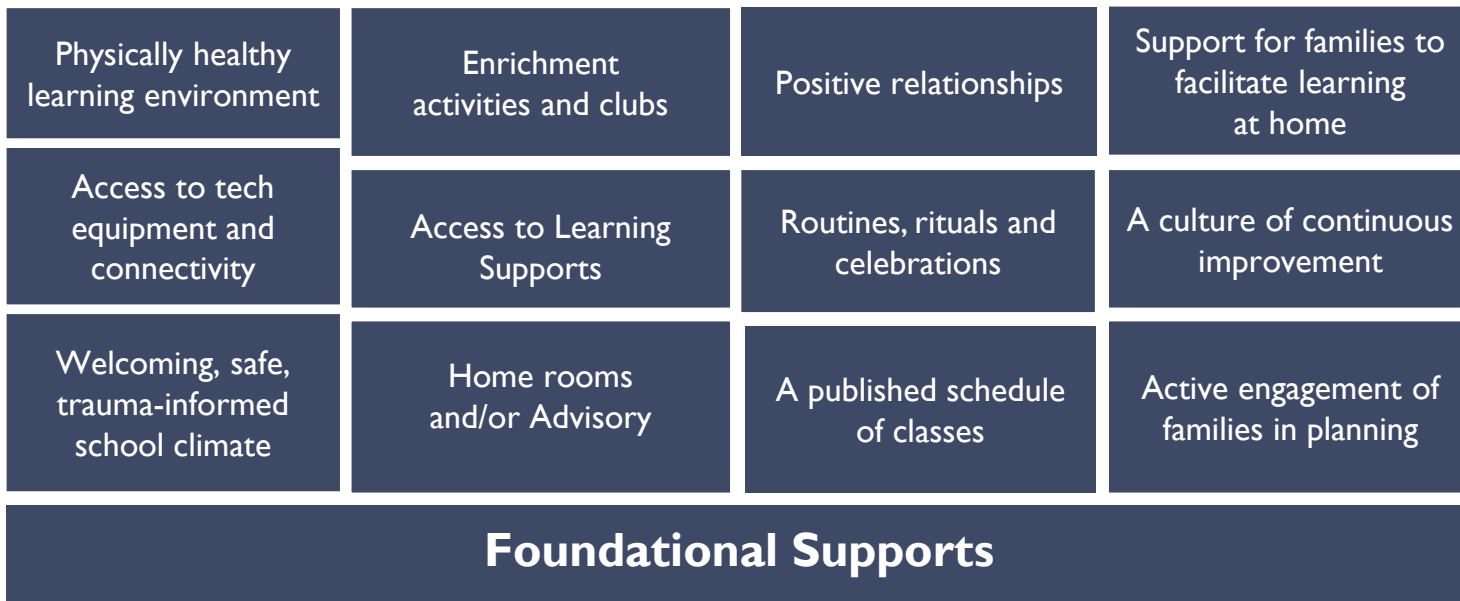
Take a Tiered Approach to Engagement





**Begin with a strong,
“relationship centered”
foundation**

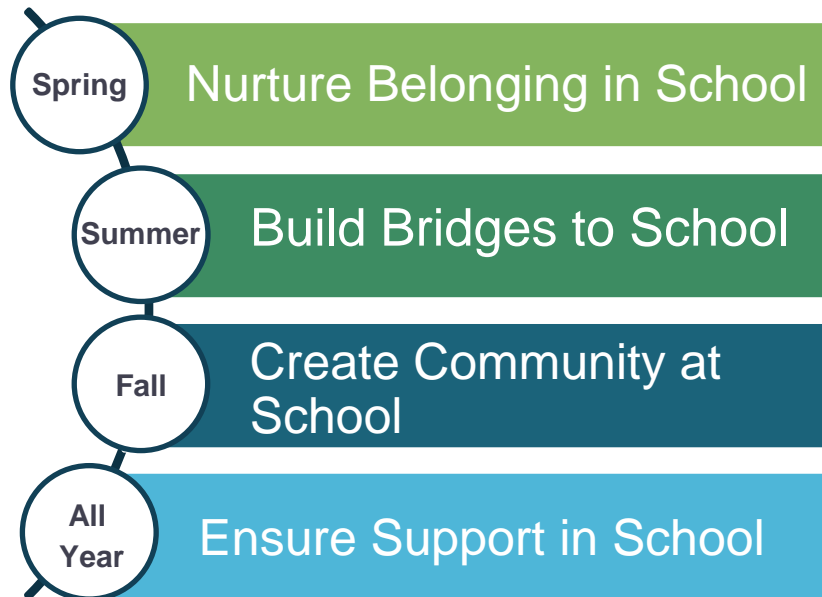
**Given the uncertainties of Covid-19,
this relationship building foundation
should be in place and sustainable
across in-person and remote learning.**



Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance

Recommended Steps:

- 1. Establish your team*
- 2. Review data & identify priority groups*
- 3. Craft engagement strategies*
- 4. Reflect, learn & improve*



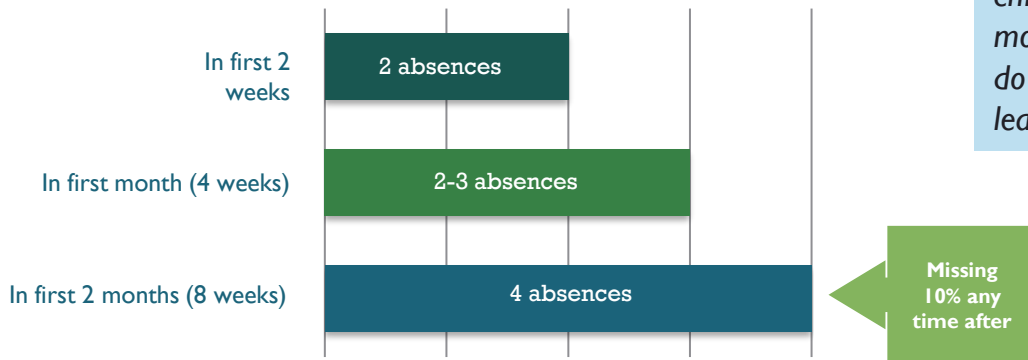
Find the toolkit here:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/pathways-to-engagement-a-toolkit-for-covid-19-recovery-through-attendance/>



Chronic absence in prior year or 1st Month of School = Need for Additional Support

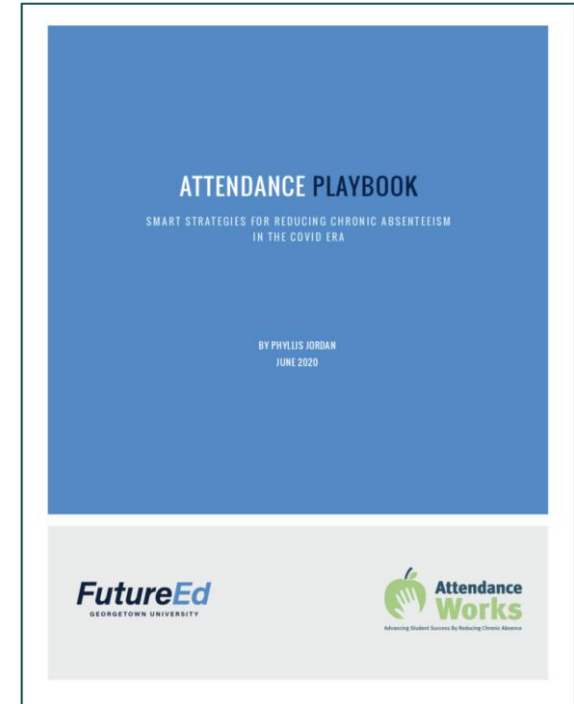
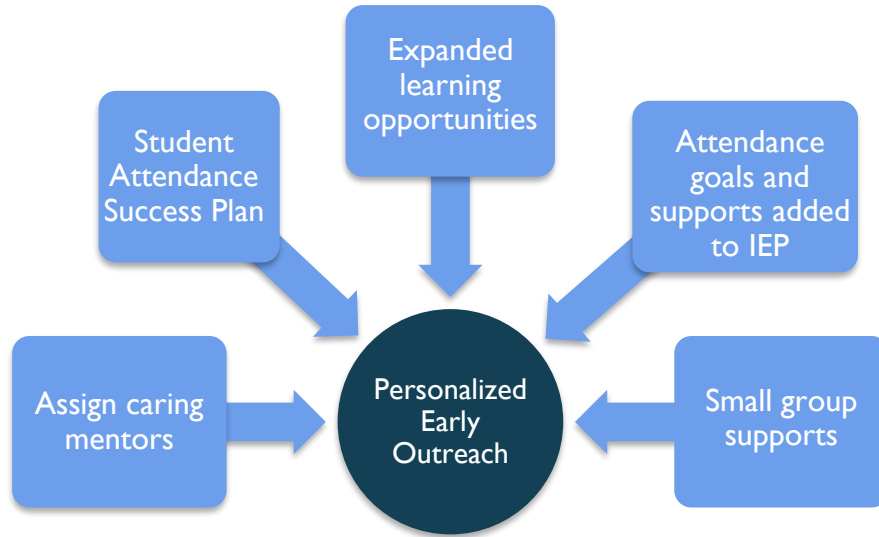
- ✓ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ✓ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:



Note: Quarantine creates chronic absence in the first month of school if students do not have access to learning opportunities.



Tier 2 Strategies Layer in Support, Strengthen Relationships, and Take a Problem-Solving Approach



Attendance Playbook: <https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/>

Implementation Guide: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/>



We Must Examine How to Scale, Adapt and Tailor Tier 2 Supports

Scale: *(Potential Approaches)*

- ✓ More people
- ✓ Add virtual options
- ✓ Group students

Adapt:

- ✓ Identify and address common barriers e.g. lack of access to health care, poor transportation, housing instability, etc. for groups of students with disproportionately high levels of chronic absence.

Support:

- ✓ Allocate more funding
- ✓ Add training



Pay Attention to Transition Grades

Grade	Why pay attention to transition in these grades?
Kindergarten	What happens when children enter formal schooling helps lay the foundation for future success. Families often do not recognize how absences add up quickly for young children and are often very concerned about their children's health and safety.
6 th	The shift to middle school is an important transition often marking when parents rely upon students to show up to class on their own. Academic and behavioral success during this transition year is crucial for later school success.
9 th	Students on-track in the 9 th grade are <i>almost four times</i> more likely to graduate than off-track students. Students may not recognize the impact of absences on passing courses and gaining needed skills.
12 th	Senior year is a critical time for ensuring students complete all the requirements for graduation and enrolling in post-secondary education.

Panelists



Maribel Childress
Superintendent
Gravette School District
Arkansas



Todd Rogers
Professor of Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School



Charlene Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of
Education

Gravette School District

Gravette, Arkansas



Gravette School District 2021-2022



- Located in the northwest corner of Arkansas
 - 1,970 students enrolled in PK-12th grade , 1,957 in 2019, 1,914 in 2020
 - 50% of students are identified low income
 - 84% White
 - 7% Hispanic/Latino
 - 4% Two or more races
 - 2% American Indian
 - 4% English learners
 - 14% Special education students
- ★ PK-10th grade's only learning option is face-to-face, onsite 5 full days/week
 - ★ 11th-12th grade may choose face-to-face onsite instruction, 100% virtual school, or a hybrid model
 - 6 students are currently enrolled in virtual school



Gravette School District Ready for Learning Plan

HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Stay home when sick** ☆
2. Physical distancing when possible
3. Frequent handwashing
4. Use good respiratory etiquette
5. Extra attention to cleaning and disinfection
6. Increased ventilation
7. Water bottle filling stations available at each school
8. Individual desk screening for elementary students
9. Contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation
10. Mask wearing is optional - we will encourage, support and show kindness to the choices each family makes in regards to mask wearing

C L A S S R O O M S



- Physical distancing when possible, according to updated guidance
 - CDC recommends schools maintain 3 feet between students
 - CDC recommends schools maintain 6 feet between students and adults, and between adults who are not fully vaccinated
- Seating will be arranged to allow for minimal close contact among students
- Seating charts will be maintained and updated within each classroom
- Ongoing cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted by the custodial staff
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle for use each day. Water bottles can be filled in the school's water bottle filling station.
- Handwashing and/or hand sanitizer is provided for each classroom
- Individual desk screening will be provided for elementary students



Maribel Childress, 9 days ago

Families and friends, we need your help to keep our students safe and healthy and attending school! We continue to have large numbers of students being quarantined because a classmate came to school for 3-4 days with symptoms before going to get tested or while awaiting test results. A little snuffle or a sort-of sore throat or a headache that seems harmless, could be COVID. In the past, when one of my children was "a little sick" I would send them to school if they didn't have a fever. We can't do that anymore and keep our student body healthy and engaged in onsite learning. The very best way to prevent the spread of COVID and eliminate quarantines is for those with any kind of symptoms to stay home until they know for certain they do not have COVID. Thank you so much for your help! It is greatly appreciated! We want our students in school, learning and growing and having fun with us every day!

How has COVID affected your attendance messaging?



I don't understand if things are not what they used to be like your announcement on the school app. How is she unexcused without a doctor's note. And she should be at school if not running a fever. But should be kept home with a cough or sore throat!? I keep her home with cough or sore throat she will be unexcused if she has no fever. I'm basically being told 2 different things by 2 different school staff members.

So what I'm saying is none of this makes any sense. You're saying one thing the nurse is saying basically the opposite. And how is keeping our kids home without fever excused during this entire mess!?

How do you balance encouraging attendance while encouraging families to keep children home when they are sick?



Strategies for Supporting the Needs of Quarantined Students



- Director of Academic Success to support building administrators, teachers, students and families
- One to one technology
- Provide internet hotspots if needed
- Synchronus and asynchronous learning opportunities
- Instructional videos and assignments posted to Google Classroom
- After school tutoring by teacher and by content
- Quarantine Catch Up
- Seat time recovery



Gravette School District 2020-2021 Attendance Data

2020-2021 Chronic Absence Rates

PK-2nd grade	17%
3rd-5th grade	9%
6th-8th grade	7%
9th-12th grade	10%

Who is most at-risk?

- ★ Kindergarten students
- ★ 9th grade students/high school freshmen
- ★ Students whose parents work the night shift

Strategies for Supporting At-Risk Students



- Director of Academic Success to support building administrators, teachers, students and families
- Relationship building
- Home visits
- Strategic communication with families and youth
 - Attendance Education Campaign for kindergarten parents
 - Attendance Education Campaign for 9th grade parents
- Purposefully leaning in to targeted at-risk students on day one
- Collaboration with community partners
 - Heroes Mentors
 - Student Success Center
 - Bright Futures
- Engagement activities
 - Creating projects to enter in the county fair
- Summer school
- Credit recovery opportunities

Todd Rogers, Professor of Public Policy



HARVARD Kennedy School

Writing for Busy Families

- Be clear on *purpose*
- People are busy
- People skim
- People prefer accessible writing
- Well written different than effectively written

“Well Written” Messages...



Writing for Busy Families

1. More is less
2. Write so skimmers can navigate
3. Write accessibly
4. Make response easy

Original: 190 words



Closing the Attendance Gap in 2021: Insights from Leaders Doing the Work



Thursday, January 14



3:00–4:00 pm ET



Virtual

Chronic absenteeism has always been a complex issue since barriers to attendance are often the result of systemic inequity. **As the urgency to improve attendance heightens, it's critical to look beyond the headlines and at the data.**

With COVID-19 exacerbating the equity gap, stakeholders across learning communities need to work collectively to remove barriers to attendance for students and families. **Join a panel of district leaders to discuss this important topic, including:**

- How they are using data to inform their spring strategy
- Practices they have found effective for addressing absenteeism and learning loss
- How they are supporting and engaging families

Panelists:

- Dr. Carletha Shaw-Rolle, Cadre Director CS 1, Broward County Public Schools (FL)
- Shannon Trejo, Chief Academic Officer, Dallas Independent School District (TX)
- Derek Little, Deputy Chief of Academics (Programs), Dallas Independent School District (TX)

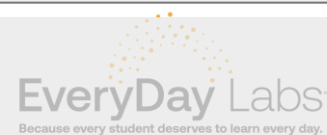
Moderated by:

- Dr. Todd Rogers, Professor, Harvard University; Chief Scientist, EveryDay Labs

[Register Now!](#)

Original > Short
93% online

Shortened: 75 words



Closing the Attendance Gap in 2021: Insights from Leaders Doing the Work



January

+204%



3:00–4:00 pm ET

Virtual

sign up rate

Join a panel of district leaders to discuss this important topic.

- Dr. Carletha Shaw-Rolle, Cadre Director CS 1, Broward County Public Schools (FL)
- Shannon Trejo, Chief Academic Officer, Dallas Independent School District (TX)
- Derek Little, Deputy Chief of Academics (Programs), Dallas Independent School District (TX)

Moderated by:

- Dr. Todd Rogers, Professor, Harvard University; Chief Scientist, EveryDay Labs

[Register Now!](#)

We've finished our newsletter draft.

We think it's good.

What experiment do you propose?

Done.

Sent half our list of 50k the Original and half the Shortened one...

Whoa!!

Shortened had

**2x as many
clicks**

compared to Original

Great! How about you cut the words by 50%? It'll be hard, but maybe try?

Result??



6 seconds to figure out:

As a parent receiving this message at the end of a full day with kids asking about dinner...

what's the most important info for you?



Dear XYZ District Families and Staff,

Today the district was informed that an individual with COVID-19 was at ABC School while potentially infectious. By law, we must maintain this person's confidentiality, which prevents us from further identifying the individual and his/her reason for being in the school. We are working collaboratively with the JKL County Department of Health to identify any students and staff who may have been in contact with this person.

Individuals who were in close contact must be quarantined for 14 days from the last exposure date and should monitor for symptoms.

We will take the following actions:

- ABC School will initially remain closed for 48 hours.
- ABC School is the only building closing on xx/yy/zz and xx/yy/zz .
- ABC will deliver instruction virtually this week on xx/yy/zz and xx/yy/zz.
- The school building will be disinfected following DOH and CDC guidelines.
- The school will begin contact tracing that will be communicated to the department of health.

The JKL County Department of Health has a contact tracing system in place for JKL County when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. The intent is to identify those who have been in close contact with a positive person. **Close contact means being within six feet of a person with COVID-19 for more than 10 minutes.**

If your child is identified as a close contact of the person who tested positive, you will receive a call from a contact tracer. For such calls, your caller ID may read NYS Contact Tracing or display a phone number with a (518) area code. Please answer these calls promptly and provide the Contact Tracers with the information they need to protect us all.

Furthermore, the district will also send emails to families notifying them if their children have been identified as having contact with an individual that is positive. If you do not receive an email in the next 48 hours, your child is NOT believed to have any risk of exposure.

As a reminder, if you believe at any point you and/or your child may have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you and/or your child should self-quarantine and be tested.

If you suspect your child is becoming ill, your child should stay home. Symptoms of COVID-19 are listed on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>. You should consult with your physician for medical advice.

Visit the ZX State Find a Test Site Near You page at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you> to find a list of testing sites. If you go to a testing site run by New York State, the test is free. For more information on COVID-19, please call (888) 364-3065 or visit the Westchester Department of Health homepage.

Please be assured that we will be transparent about any COVID-19 cases in our district, and we will keep you informed if more information needs to be communicated. Please contact your child's school administrators or 555-555-5555 ext. 1234 if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Superintendent

**As a parent receiving
this message at the end
of a full day with kids
asking about dinner...**

**what's the most
important info for you?**



**School's
closed next 2
days!!**



Dear XYZ District Families and Staff,

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Individuals who were in close contact must be quarantined for 14 days from the last exposure date and should monitor for symptoms.

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Sincerely,

Dr. Superintendent

Dear XYZ District Families and Staff,

ABC School will be closed for at least the next 48 hours.

Today the district was informed that an individual with COVID-19 was at ABC School while potentially infectious.

How will you know if your child is a close contact?

If your child is identified as a close contact of the person who tested positive, you will receive a call from a contact tracer. For such calls, your caller ID may read NYS Contact Tracing or display a phone number with a (518) area code. Please answer these calls promptly and provide the Contact Tracers with the information they need to protect us all.

Furthermore, the district will also send emails to families notifying them if their children have been identified as having contact with an individual that is positive. If you do not receive an email in the next 48 hours, your child is NOT believed to have any risk of exposure.

As a reminder, if you believe at any point you and/or your child may have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you and/or your child should self-quarantine and be tested.

See below signature for details on close contacts.

What to do if you or your child is sick?

If you suspect your child is becoming ill, your child should stay home. Symptoms of COVID-19 are listed on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>. You should consult with your physician for medical advice.

Visit the ZK State Find a Test Site Near You page at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you> to find a list of testing sites. If you go to a testing site run by New York State, the test is free. For more information on COVID-19, please call (888) 364-3065 or visit the Westchester Department of Health homepage.

What is ABC School doing?

We will take the following actions:

- ABC School will initially remain closed for 48 hours.
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- ABC will deliver instruction virtually this week on xx/yy/zz and xx/yy/zz.
- The school building will be disinfected following DOH and CDC guidelines.
- The school will begin contact tracing that will be communicated to the department of health.

Please know that we will be transparent about any COVID-19 cases in our district, and we will keep you informed. Please contact your child's school administrators or 555-555-5555 ext. 1234 if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Superintendent

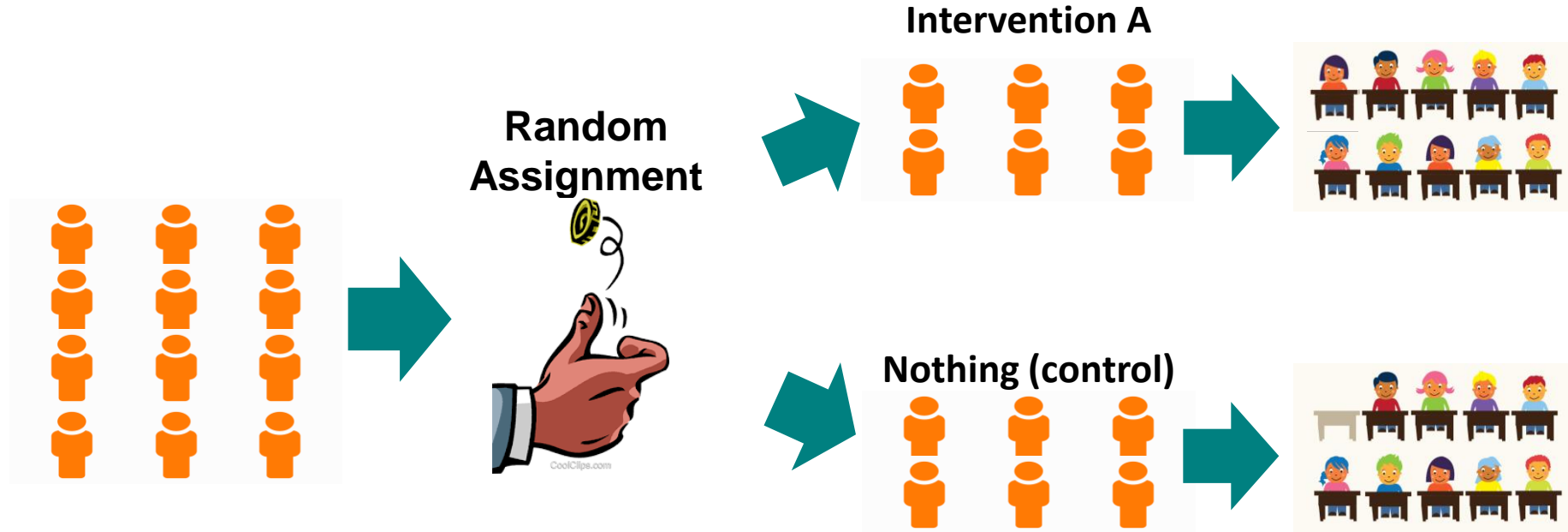
More on close contact definition

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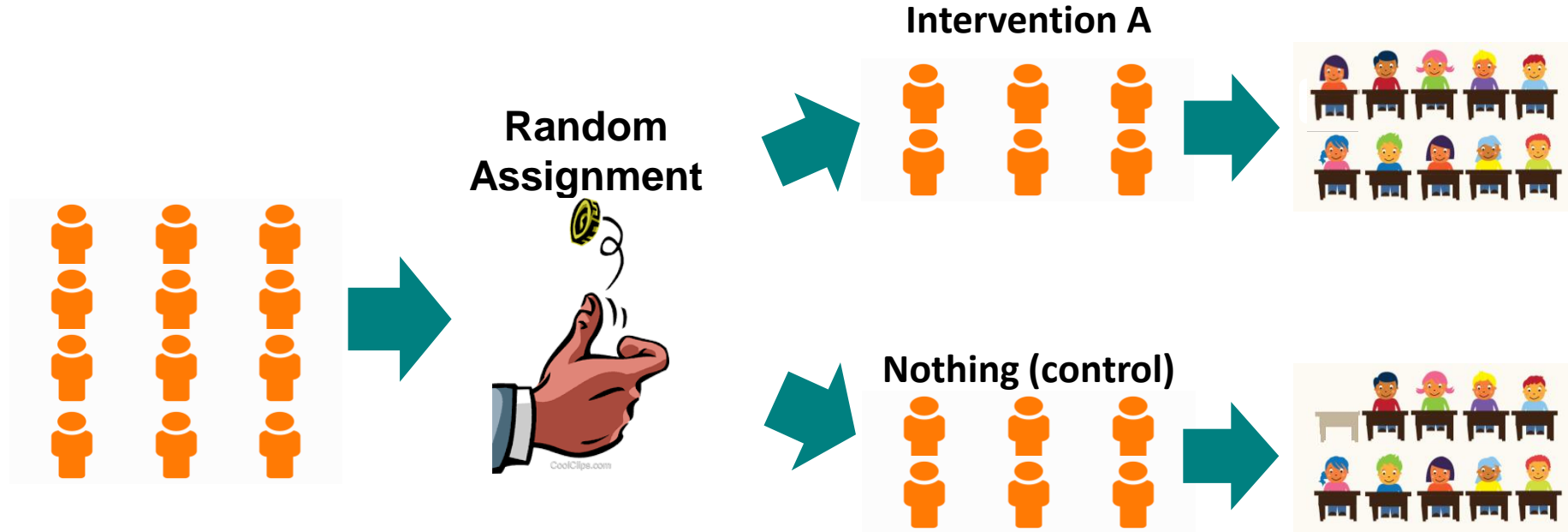
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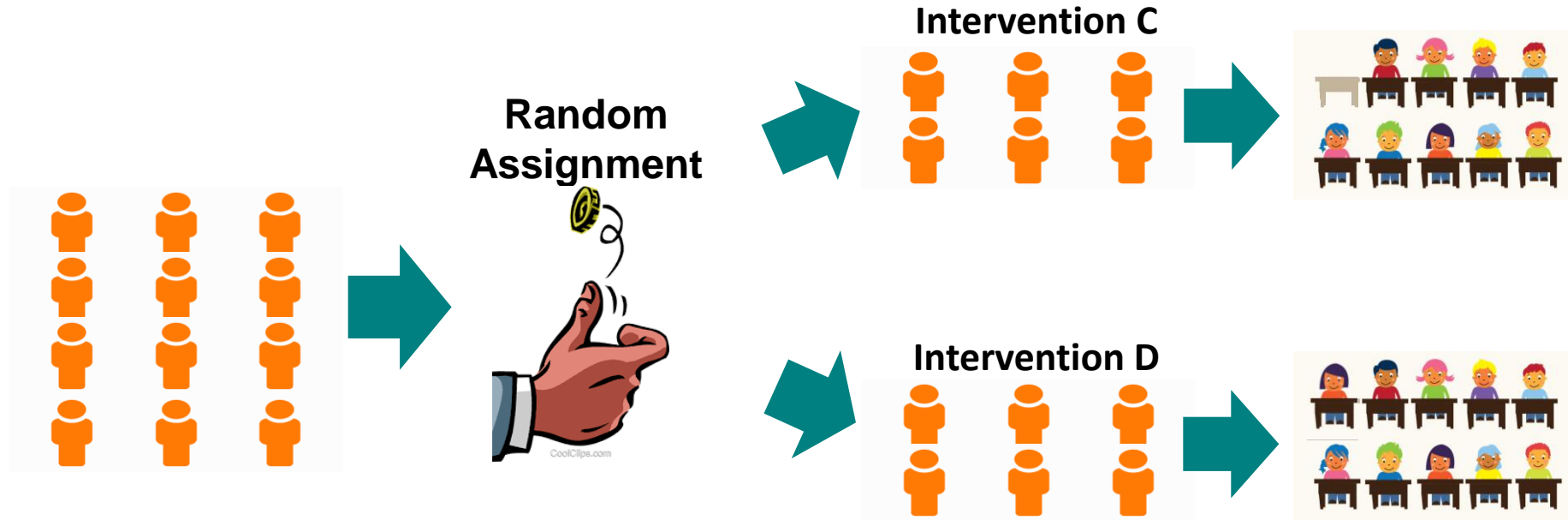
How Randomized Experiments Work



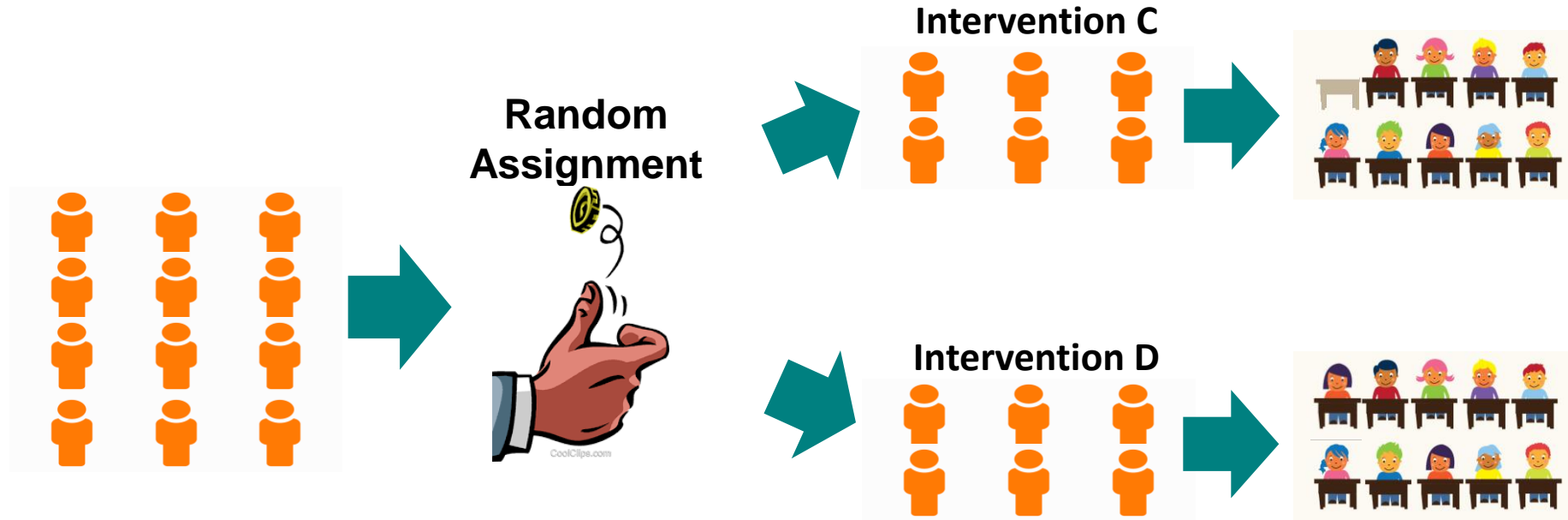
How Randomized Experiments Work



How Randomized Experiments Work



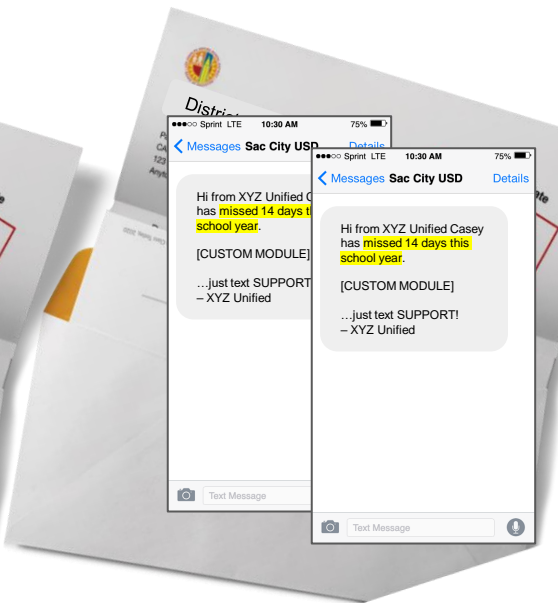
How Randomized Experiments Work



Paper Reports Only



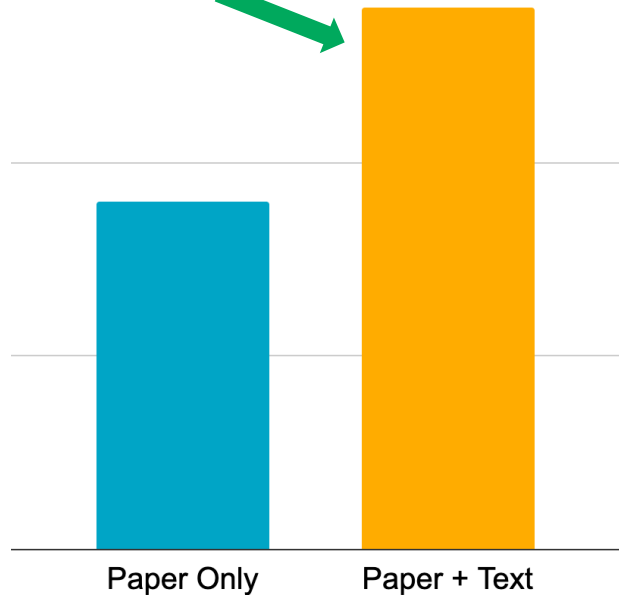
Paper Reports + Text Messages



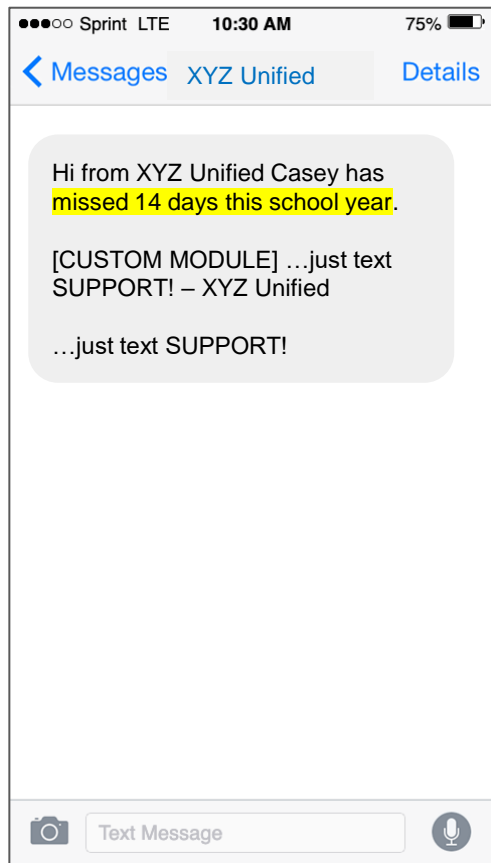
55% More Effective



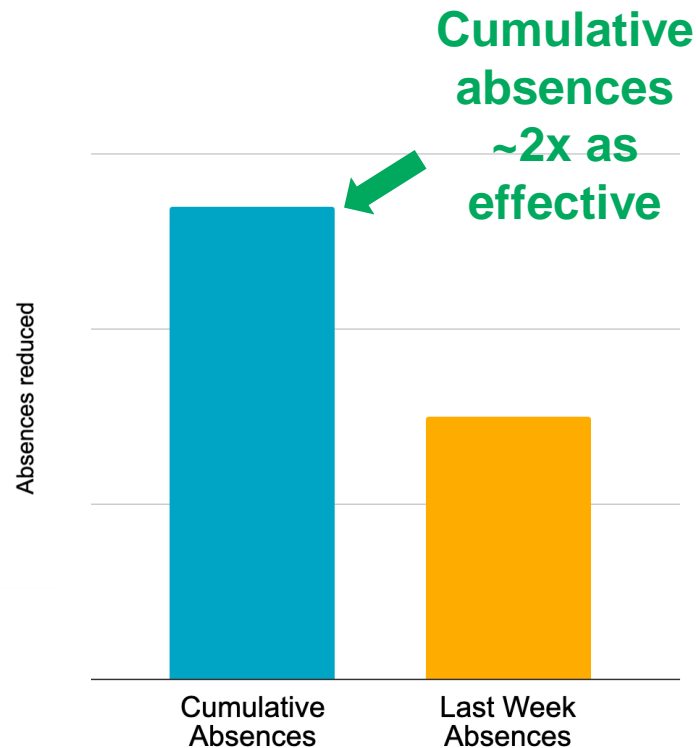
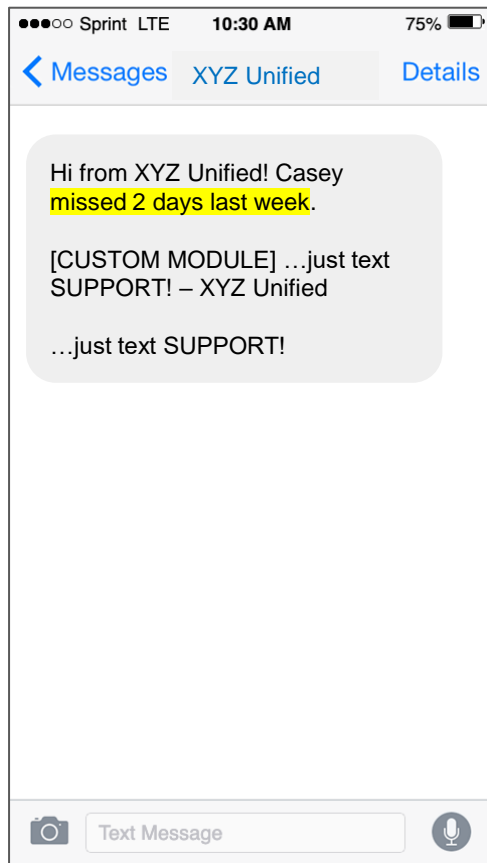
Absences reduced



Cumulative Absences

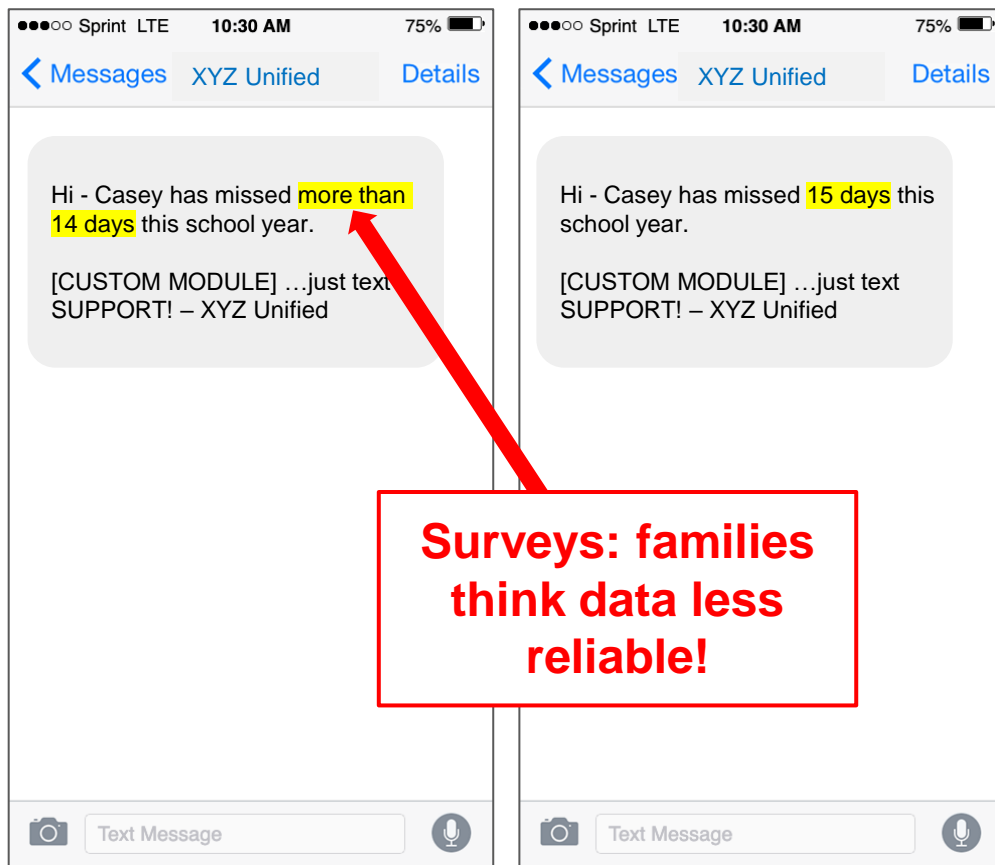


Last Week Absences

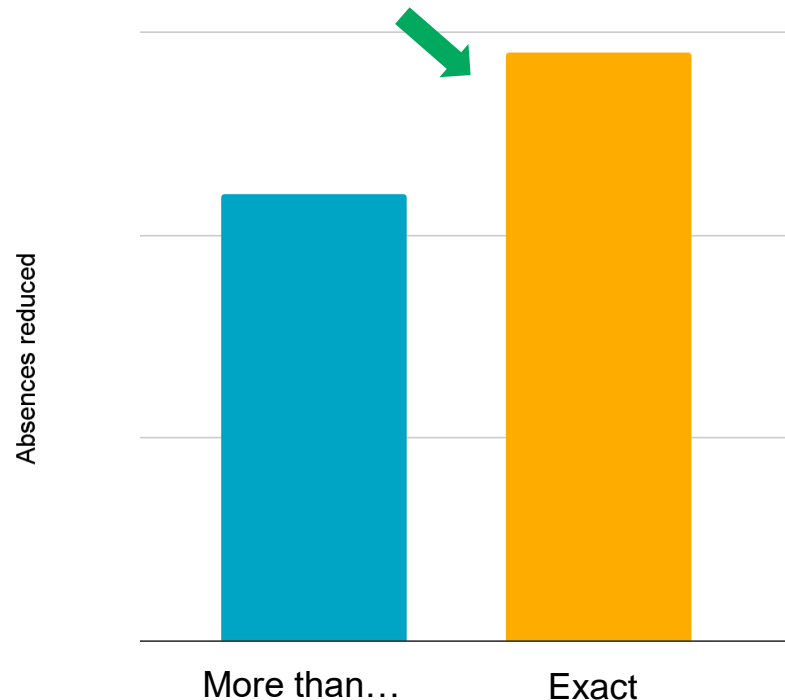


More than...

Exact



Exact days 22% improvement



Free Webinar!

The Science of Communicating with Busy Families & Educators

Friday, October 22, 2021 @ 10am PT / 1pm ET

With schools and districts sending more than the usual number of communications, making sure messages are read and understood is paramount. Attendance Works and the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) are delighted to invite Todd Rogers of Harvard University to share the science of writing so busy families and educators read, understand and take action based on our messages.

In this webinar, Rogers will illustrate that most of us don't carefully read practical communications (emails, texts, forms and mail). We skim. This has surprising implications for how we should write. Rogers will share an actionable checklist for individuals and teams, and six easy-to-apply principles for writing that is more effective, inclusive and kind.

Note: Because this is a highly interactive session, it will not be recorded or posted afterwards.

Register here: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wrNy6FIKTSG_JJsZhap8TA



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Supported: Leveraging Attendance Data to Ensure Ongoing Success

Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker

September 29, 2021

Connecticut's Educational Landscape

513,079 Students

- 50% Nonwhite
- 42.7% Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals
- 16.2% with Disabilities
- 8.2% English Learners

205 School Districts

- 1,505 Schools/Programs
- 52,135 Certified Staff
- 66,000 Non-certified Staff

Chronic Absenteeism Rates

- 2012-13: 11.5%
- 2013-14: 10.8%
- 2014-15: 10.6%
- 2015-16: 9.6%
- 2016-17: 9.9%
- 2017-18: 10.7%
- 2018-19: 10.4%
- 2019-20: 12.2%*



Source: EdSight

**Chronic absenteeism calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020*

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Leveraging Data to Inform Policy: CSDE's Initial Attendance Response to COVID-19

Maintained a standard definition of attendance (i.e., showing up to school for half of a day)

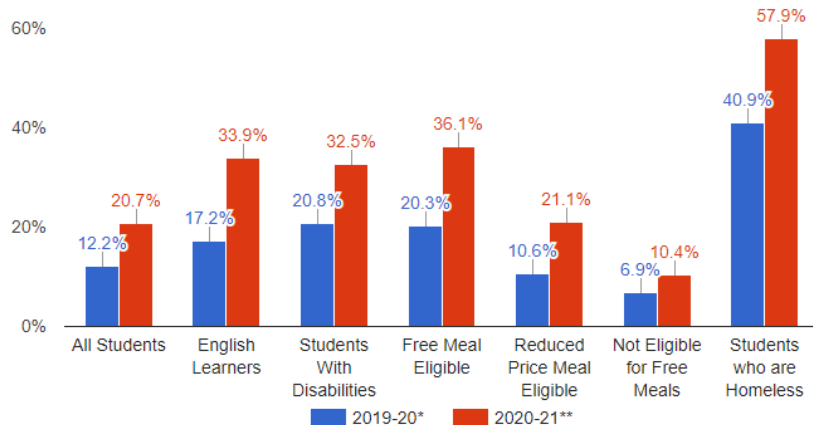
Published state [guidance](#) on hybrid and remote learning which included the state's definition of

Collected attendance data monthly versus at the end of the year with data reported separately for in-person and remote learning

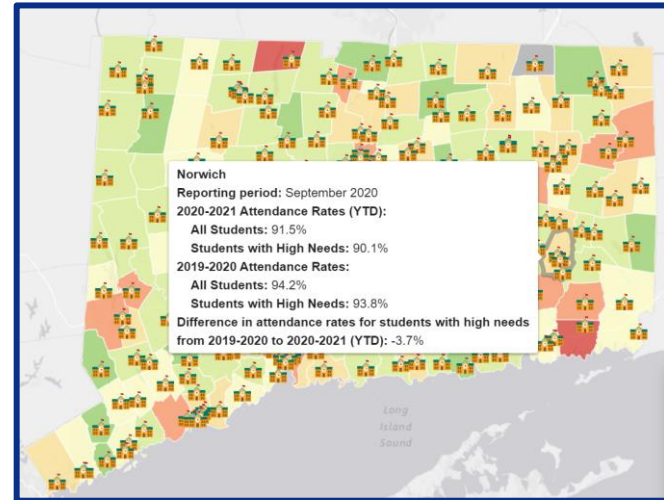
Released monthly data reports comparing current and prior year attendance and chronic absence

Reviewed district data submissions on an ongoing basis and offered districts opportunities to submit corrected data

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent (YTD as of June 2021 compared to 2019-20)



*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. **Calculations include both in-person and remote days.



Source: EdSight



Nationally Recognized for Data Collection and Action

Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut

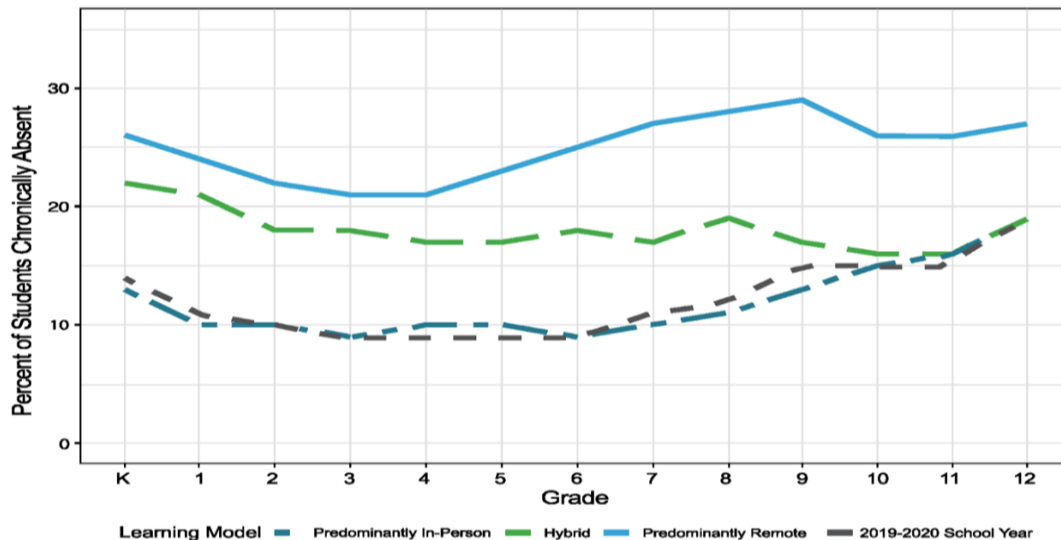


"Connecticut is uniquely positioned to analyze how patterns of chronic absence differ across learning modes, grades and student groups."

Report discusses key findings from analysis of Connecticut's attendance data

Encourages other state to adopt policies and implement data collection efforts similar to Connecticut's

Chronic absence by learning mode across grades in Connecticut for SY 2020-21



Learning Model

Predominantly Remote

Hybrid

Predominantly In-Person

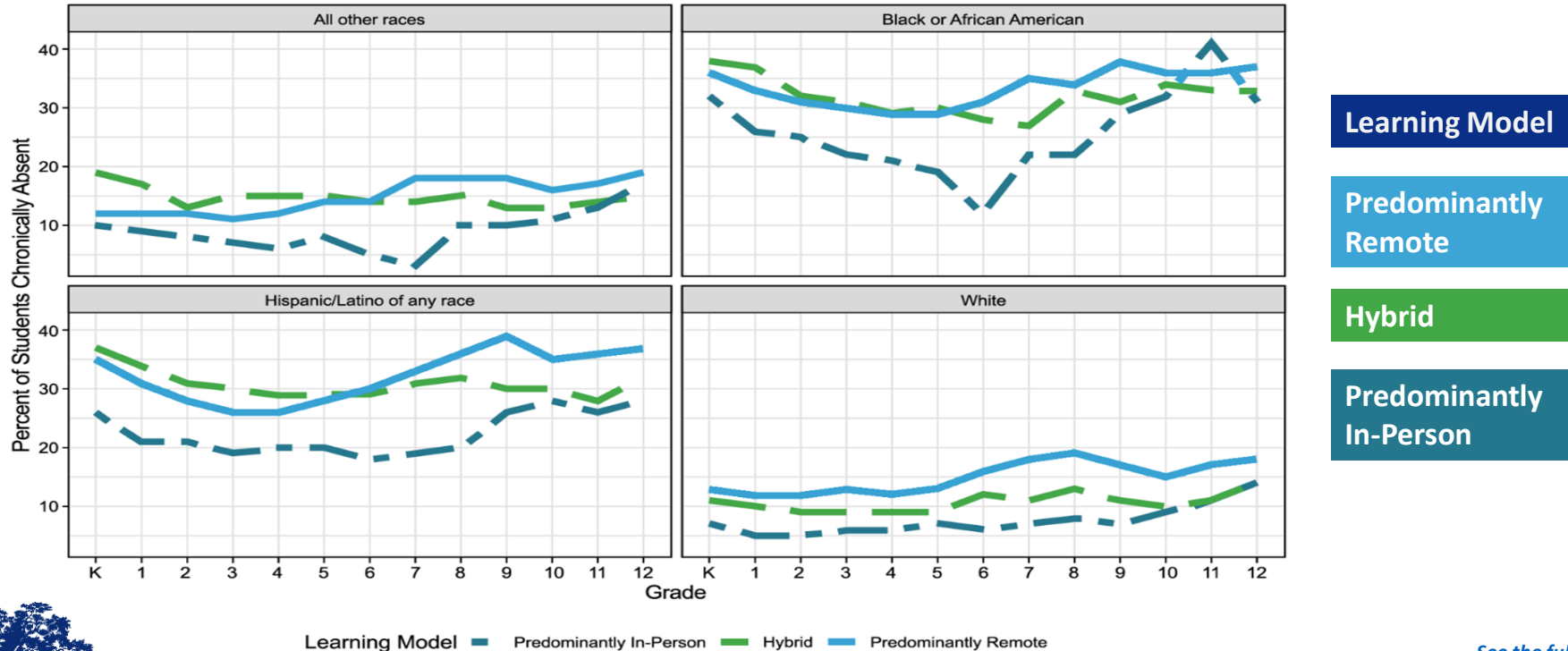
2019-20 School Year

[See the full report](#)



Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut

Patterns of chronic absence by learning mode and grade were not the same across racial and ethnic groups.

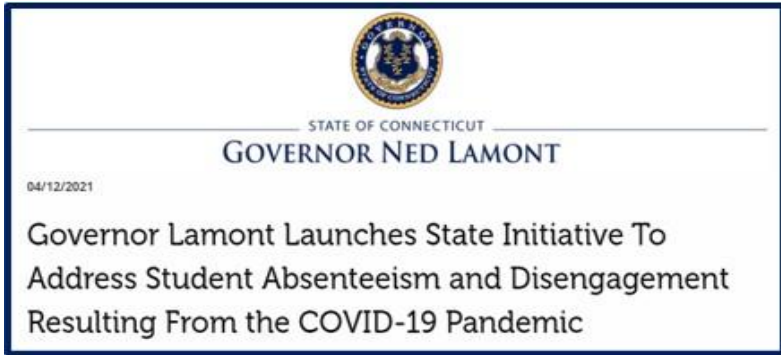


[See the full report](#)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)



Thanks to **CSDE's data systems** and **longstanding work on attendance and engagement**, the Agency was able to collaborate with the Office of the Governor and Regional Educational Service Centers to launch LEAP

- **Targeted support** to 15 districts based on multiple data points that the CSDE had collected
- Conducts home visits to **meet students and families where they are** and find out what they need to reengage with their school community
- Provide students and families with **resources** from backpacks to technology to referrals to health services
- As of September 13, **more than 2,400 visits** have been conducted

[See the press release](#)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Targeted Back-to-School and Attendance Campaigns

- Campaigns **aimed at families**
- Continued use of data to geographically target promotions
- **Multilingual**
- Social media, radio, and TV
- **BackToSchoolCT.org** features resources for families on the safe return to in-person learning



Strategic Use of Federal Funding



Selected State-level Initiatives

- Targeted supports for high-needs student groups to boost attendance and engagement
- Providing social-emotional learning tools and supports for districts
- Grassroots marketing campaign aimed at families
- Continued guidance and support for districts and families
- Collaborating with Attendance Works to support LEAP development and monthly Attendance & Engagement Community of Practice for districts

Selected District-level Initiatives

- Procuring a secure platform for two-way school-to-home communication
- Hiring a family liaison specifically for ethnically diverse and/or multilingual families
- Developing Parent/Caregiver Academies to provide opportunities and strategies to support students' education



Providing Ongoing Support for Districts and Families

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together — Fall 2021

Updated Guidance for the Use of Mitigation
Strategies in Connecticut's PreK–12 Schools
Connecticut State Department of Education
August 19, 2021



Goals for the 2021–22 School Year in Connecticut

Getting more students and staff vaccinated
in order to keep students learning in-person.

- **Vaccination is available to everyone 12 years of age and older** and is the most effective strategy available to school communities to protect continuous in-person learning and other school-based activities.

- The Connecticut Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Education (CSDE) will **facilitate on-site school vaccination clinics** for all middle and high schools during the Summer and early Fall.

Getting students and staff back into schools
and onto the field... and keeping them there:

- All students and staff **return to full-time in-person learning**. Although cohorting is no longer necessary, it can still be used as an additional mitigation strategy, if desired.

- **Students spaced at least 3 feet apart** no longer need to **quarantine** if exposed to a COVID-19 case inside their classroom and students are consistently and correctly wearing masks. Three foot spacing between seated students with masks is sufficient for reducing classroom risk and should continue to the extent feasible.

- **Fully vaccinated students and staff no longer need to quarantine** from school or other activities following contact with a COVID-19 case if they remain symptom-free.

- **All interscholastic athletic programs** can plan to begin on time this Fall. Athletic teams with larger numbers of **fully vaccinated athletes and coaches** are much more likely to have **uninterrupted and complete seasons**, as those individuals will not be subject to quarantine after exposure from a teammate, coach, official, or opponent.

- **Weekly screening testing programs** are available to schools. These programs can support continuous in-person learning in the context of higher person-densities inside buildings, especially where students are not yet eligible for vaccination (Pre-K-6).

Loosening some of the mask restrictions and other mitigation strategies in schools:

- A DPH Commissioner's Order will require masks to be used inside school buildings at least through September 30, 2021. However, **students and staff do not need to wear masks outdoors**, regardless of vaccination status.

- **School districts can allow fully vaccinated teachers to remove their masks during the instruction** at the front of the classroom (masks must still be worn at all other times indoors).

- **Cleaning and disinfection procedures** can be reduced to regular daily cleaning, with disinfecting only in certain areas (e.g., restrooms, cafeterias, nurse's offices, etc.).

Back Together this Fall

Working together, schools, families, and communities
can keep students healthy, safe, and learning in person.

Recently released 2020–21 statewide student assessment data show:

- **Students who learned in person** lost the least ground academically. In-person students spent at least seven months in the classroom during the 2020–21 school year.
- **Students who learned hybrid or remote** showed less academic growth. Hybrid students were in the classroom between three and seven months of the school year. Remote students spent less than three months in the classroom.
- **Look out for your child's report!** Individual student reports will arrive at school districts in early September, and those reports will then be sent to families.

How this data is informing the 2021–22 school year:

The state test results show that students who learn in person are more likely to have maintained grade-level material. **School districts are committing to offer full-time, in-person instruction to all students in a safe manner for the 2021–22 school year.** The tests are not being used to evaluate educators or districts. Students with high needs — English learners, students with disabilities, and/or students from low-income families — were more likely to be remote during the 2020–21 year. A return to in-person instruction in 2021–22 is even more important for them.

How can we work together to support safe, in-person learning?

We know students learn best in person with their educators and friends. Being in person also ensures that students have access to all that schools provide — from extracurricular activities to nutritious meals. CSDE is working closely with the Department of Public Health to provide guidance to districts so that schools are as safe as they can be. Steps being taken include:

masking indoors, keeping students at least three feet apart in classrooms, hand washing and more. Combining these layers of protection creates an effective strategy for keeping students and staff safe in school.

Families can join us in supporting safe, in-person learning by:

- **Encouraging your child to attend school in person, every day**, unless they have COVID-19 symptoms. Follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for staying home when sick and getting tested.
- **Getting yourself and your children, if they are age 12 or older, vaccinated against COVID-19** (visit a vaccine clinic in your community).
- **Watching for signs of stress in your children.** Try some simple and fun activities to de-stress at home, or find out what extracurricular activities are offered by your school or community. If the feelings persist, speak to your child's school counselor, pediatrician, or another medical professional.
- **Taking care of yourself.** It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Engaging in healthy coping strategies relieves stress and is also good role modeling for children.
- **Continuing to practice COVID-19 prevention strategies** such as handwashing and vaccination of eligible persons.
- **Seeking out facts and information from reliable sources** such as the CDC.

For more information:

[CDC's 10 strategies for keeping young children and adults safe back to school](#)
[Pandemia de COVID-19: cómo ayudar a los niños](#)
[COVID-19's los padres a hacer la transición para volver a la escuela](#)



Connecticut State Department of Education

- Continued public reporting of attendance data
- Collaboration with other state agencies and within CSDE to support the whole student
- Student Attendance & Engagement Advisory Team
- Talk Tuesdays
- Communicating and addressing health and safety concerns
- Commissioners' Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education



Updating Guidance for the 2021-22 School Year

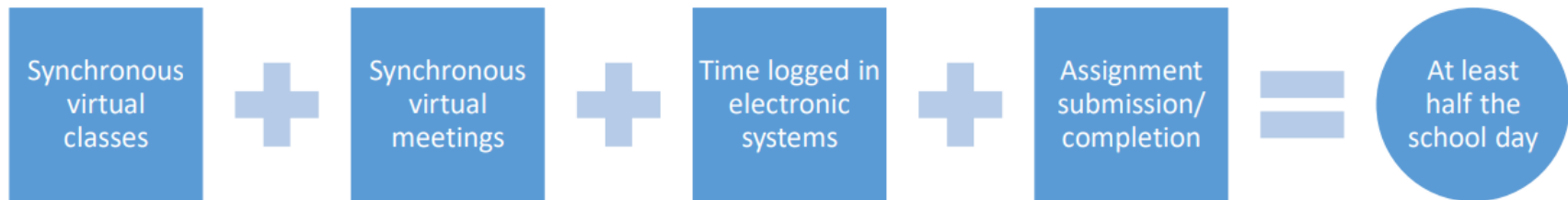


Tracking Daily Attendance on Remote Days in 2021-22

State Board of Education Policy (2008):

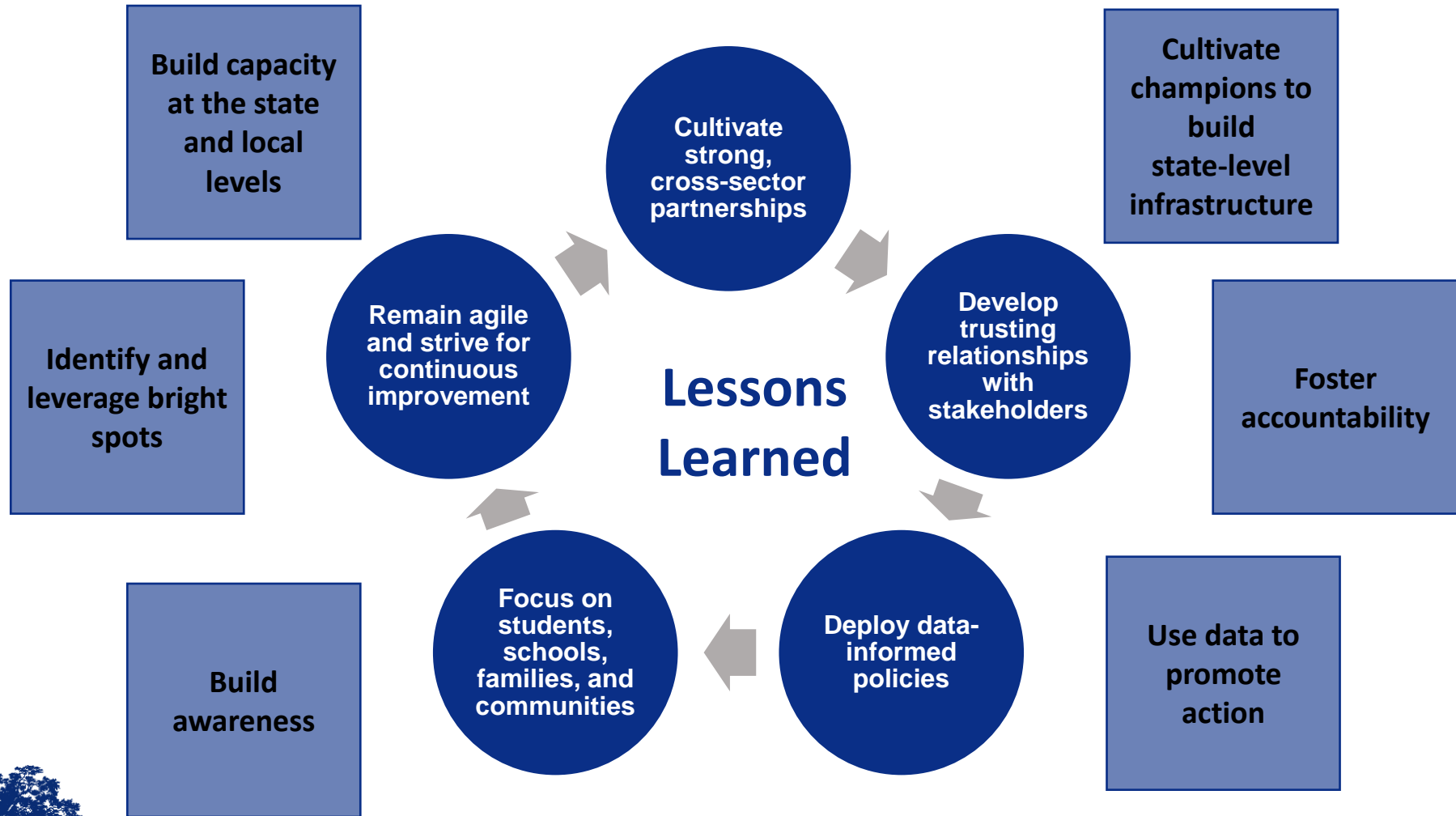
“A student is considered to be ‘in attendance’ if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day.”

A remote student can be considered as being ‘in attendance’ on a particular day if the total time spent on one or more of the following activities equals at least half the school day.



[See the complete document](#)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

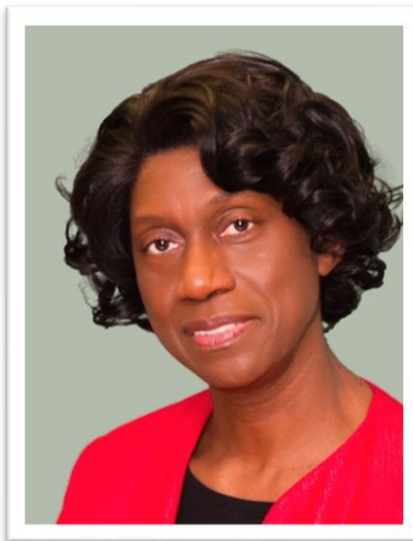
A large, light blue silhouette of a tree with a thick trunk and a full, rounded canopy is centered in the background, spanning across the middle and bottom of the slide.

Thank you!

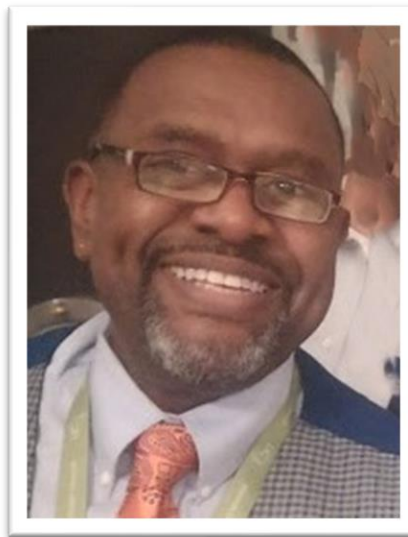
Cross Cutting Panel Discussion



Maribel Childress
Superintendent
Gravette School District
Arkansas



Charlene Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of
Education



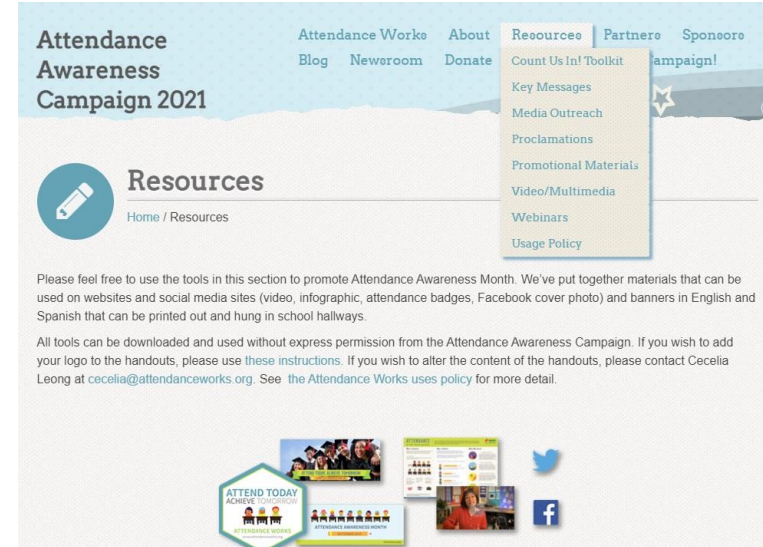
S. Kwesi Rollins
Vice President for
Leadership & Engagement
Institute for Educational Leadership



Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

- ✓ **Count Us In! toolkit for 2021**
- ✓ **Download our free social media materials and share with local districts**
- ✓ **Proclaim September Attendance Awareness Month building off our sample proclamation**
- ✓ **Join our listserv: 32,000+ members**

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN



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



Opportunities to Promote AAC 2021!

Share the Attendance Awareness website:

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

- ✓ Like us on Facebook 
- ✓ Tweet using #schooleveryday @attendanceworks 
- ✓ Add a badge to your signature line or materials



And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

GROW @ Annenberg

The Heising-Simons Foundation



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-webinar4-Supported>

Thank you!