Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

Professional Learning Series

October 5, 2023

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Welcome!

Lori Masseur
Director of Early Learning
Read On Arizona

Read On ARIZONA

THE CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING
3RD GRADE READING ≡ SUCCESS MATTERS

Mission

Read On Arizona is a statewide collective impact initiative made up of agencies, philanthropic organizations and community stakeholders committed to determining the gaps, identifying solutions, and implementing a collaborative approach to improving language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children ages birth through the end of third grade.

Background

Launched in 2012, Read On Arizona's 10-year strategic plan identified key challenges to early literacy and built on state-level work as well as local communities of practice, improving coordination, establishing baselines, setting targets, tracking results, and promoting shared accountability.

Advisory Board & Founding Partners

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Head Start Collaboration Office

City of Phoenix

Eyes On Learning

Arizona Chronic Absence Task Force

May 2023 – September 2024

Purpose:

Supporting leaders on whole-school engagement strategies for reducing student absenteeism

Considerations:

- Resources
- Evidence-based strategies
- Innovative solutions

Welcome!

Gisela Ariza
Associate Director of Programs

Helen Duffy, Ph.D
Senior Fellow

Three E-Learning Sessions

During these sessions, participants will learn how to work as a team to take a multi-tiered approach to improve attendance in their schools:

- **Session 1** — Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism
- **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support
- **Session 3** — Partnering to Make a Difference

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on whole school strategies to create
  - positive conditions for learning and
  - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism
- Understand what chronic absence is and why it matters
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance

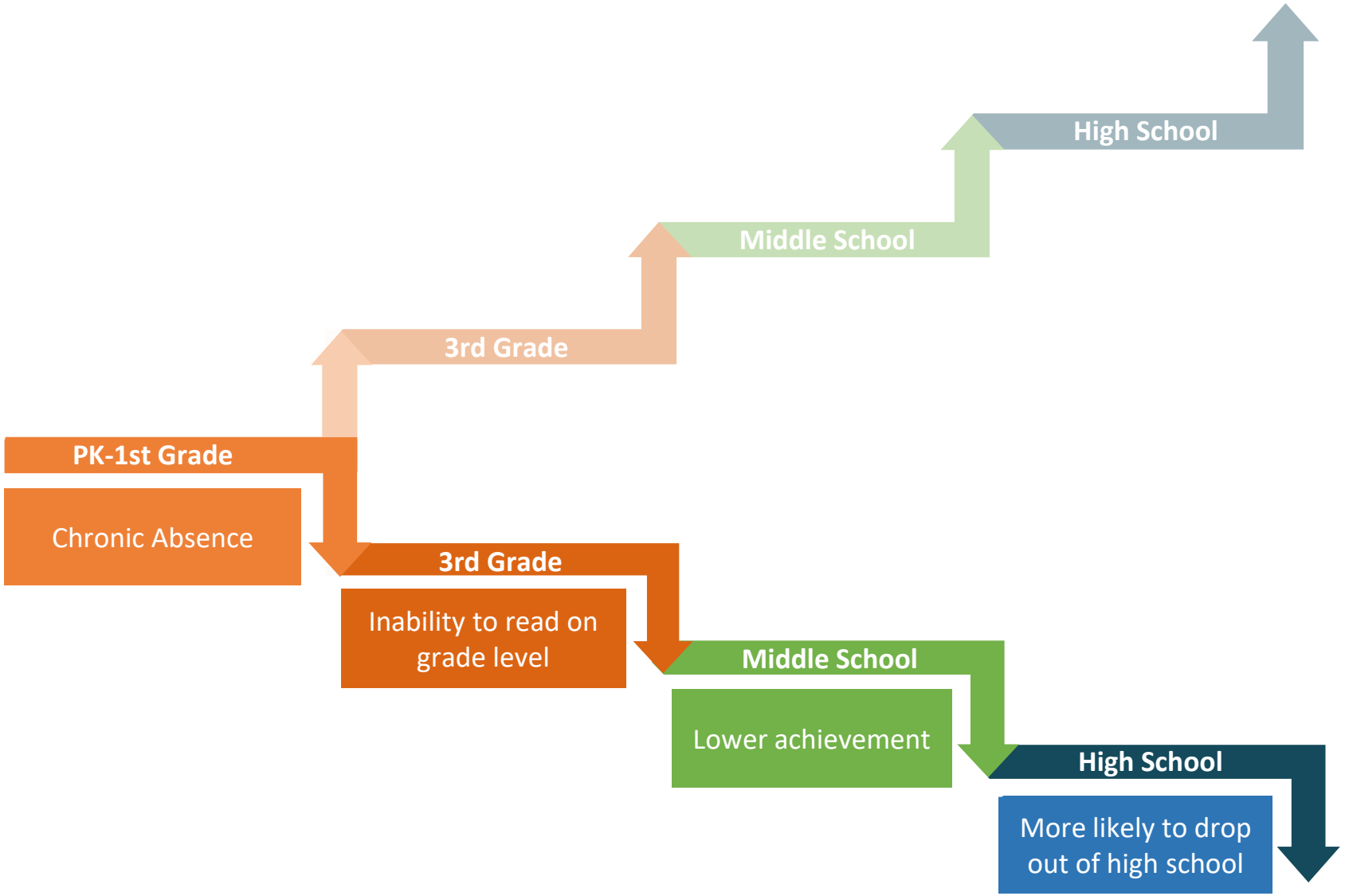
Welcome & Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district
- ✓ ***Who or what*** motivated you to attend school every day?

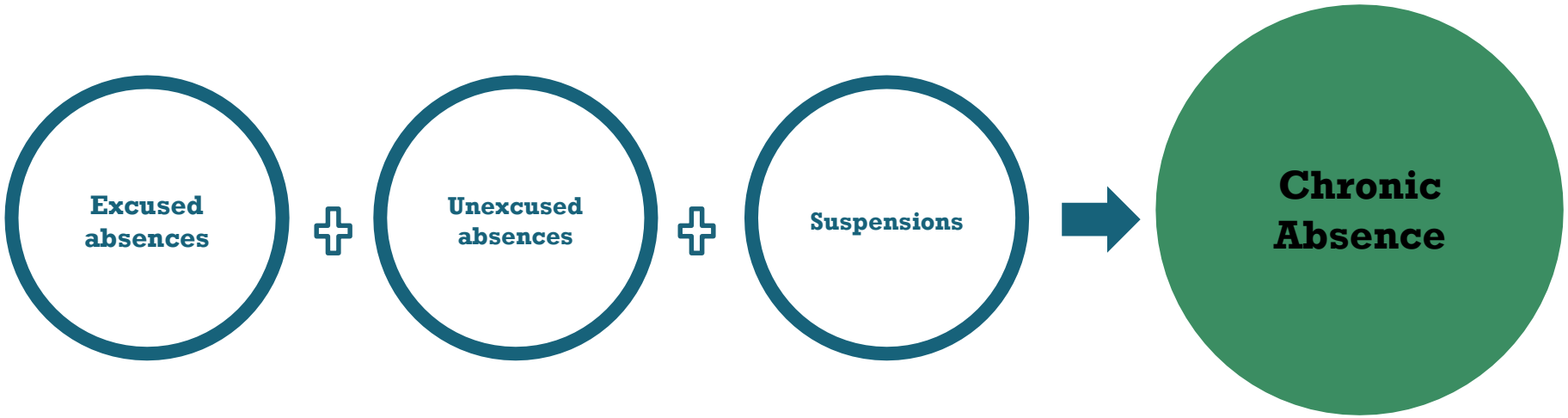
Overview of Chronic Absence

Improving Attendance Matters



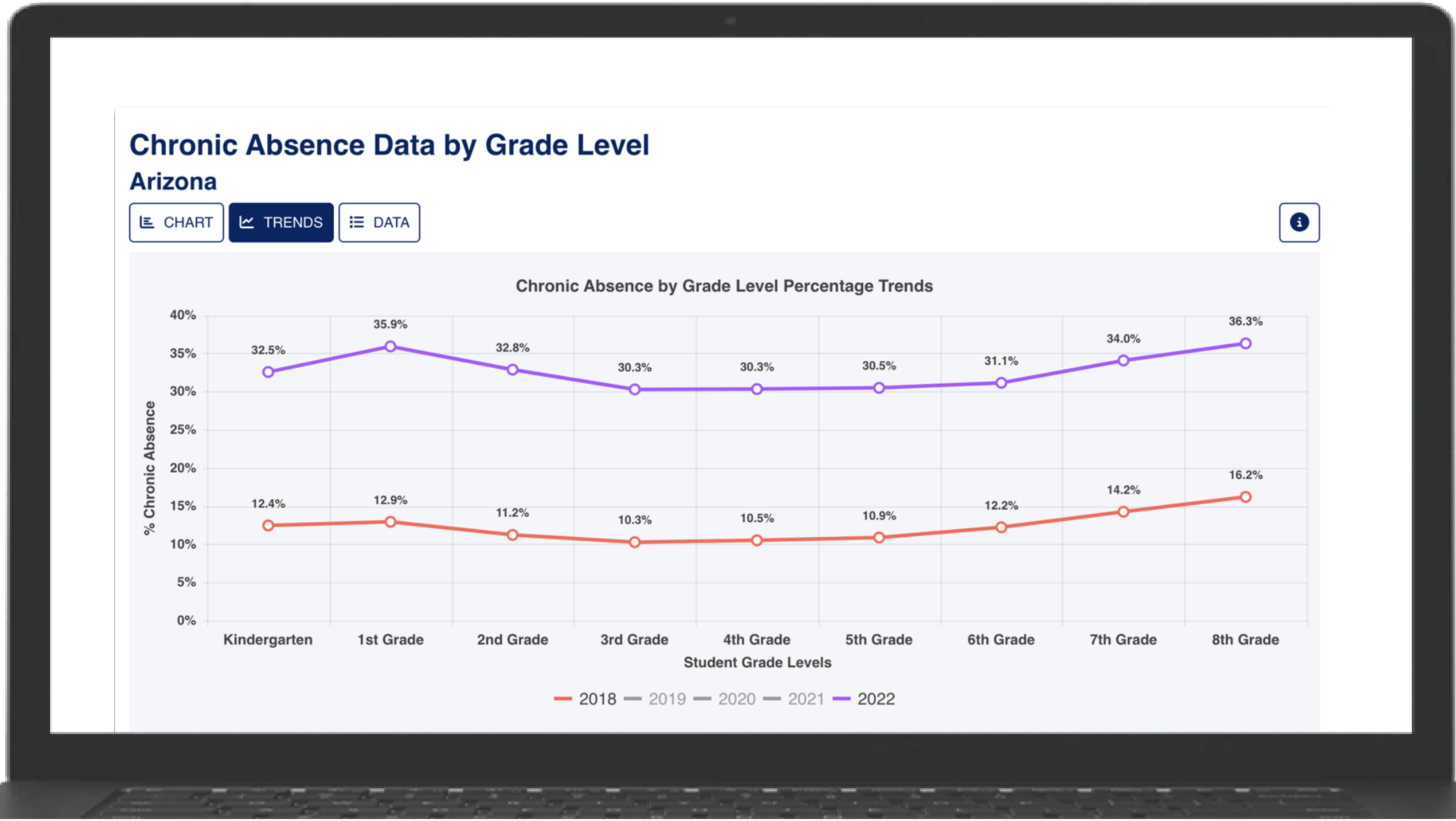
What is chronic absence?

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.**

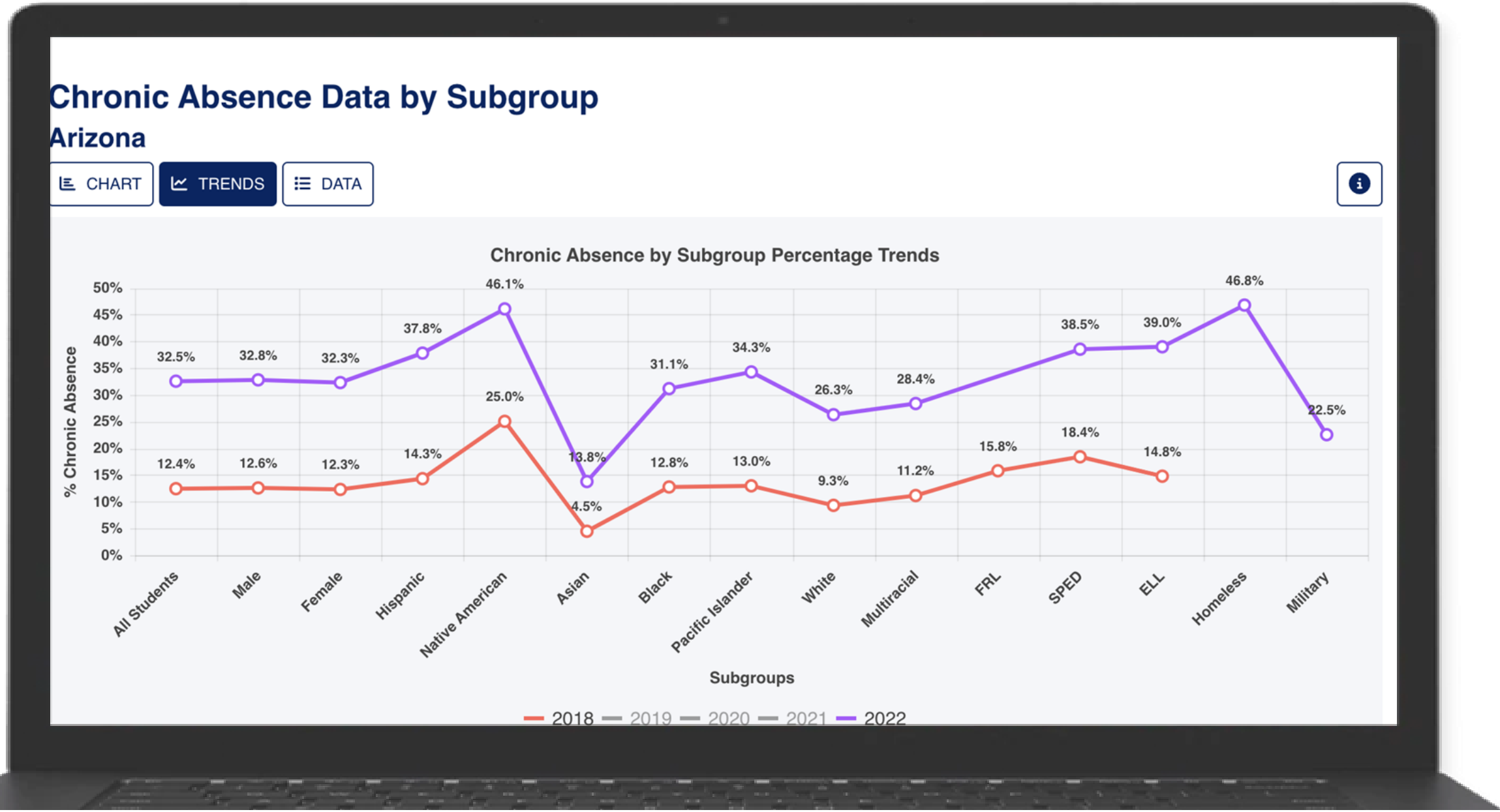


Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

Arizona Chronic Absence Data by Grade Level: 2018 & 2022

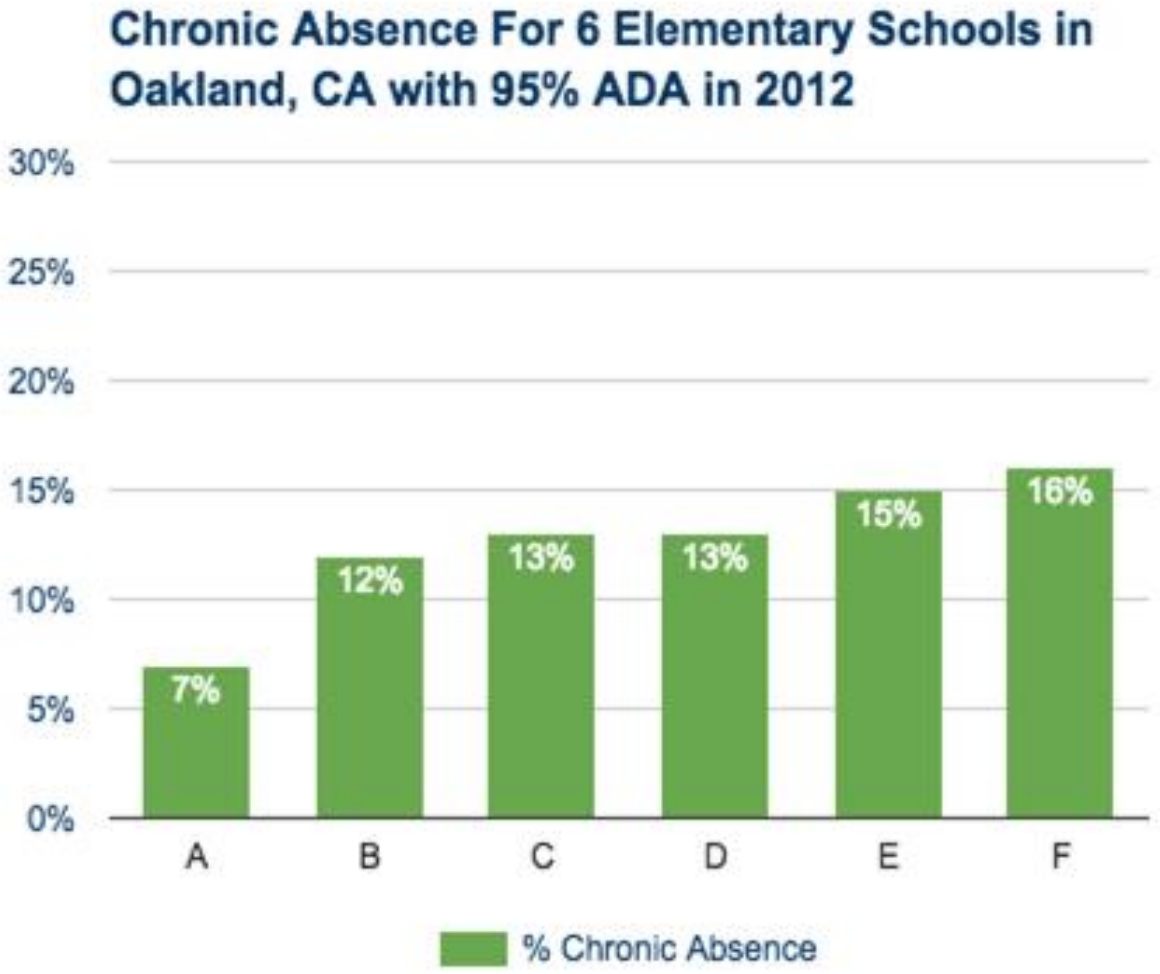


Arizona Chronic Absence Data by Student Group: 2018 & 2022

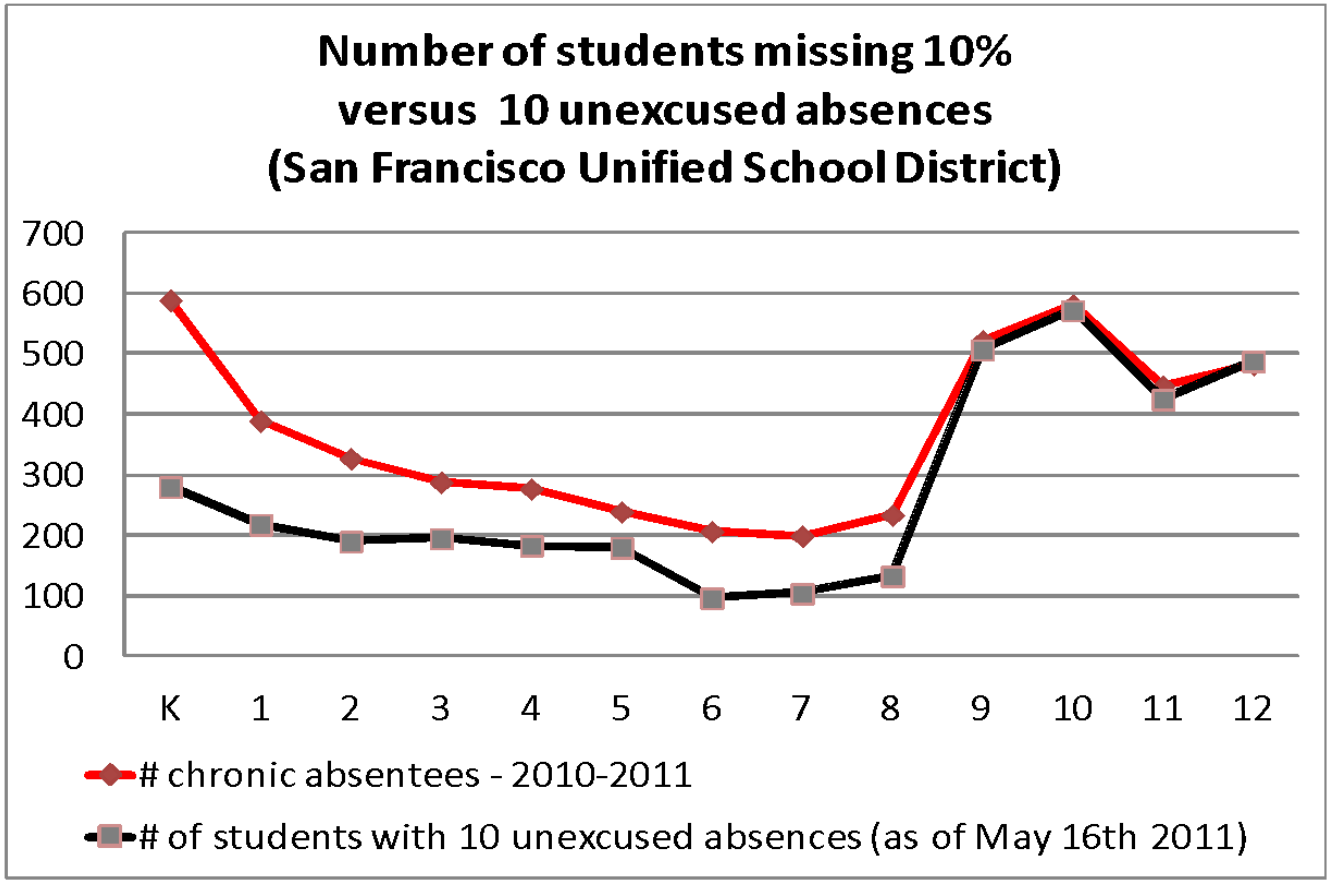


Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A



Chronic Absence vs. Unexcused Absences



What's the Difference between 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, and suspensions)*
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family and student engagement

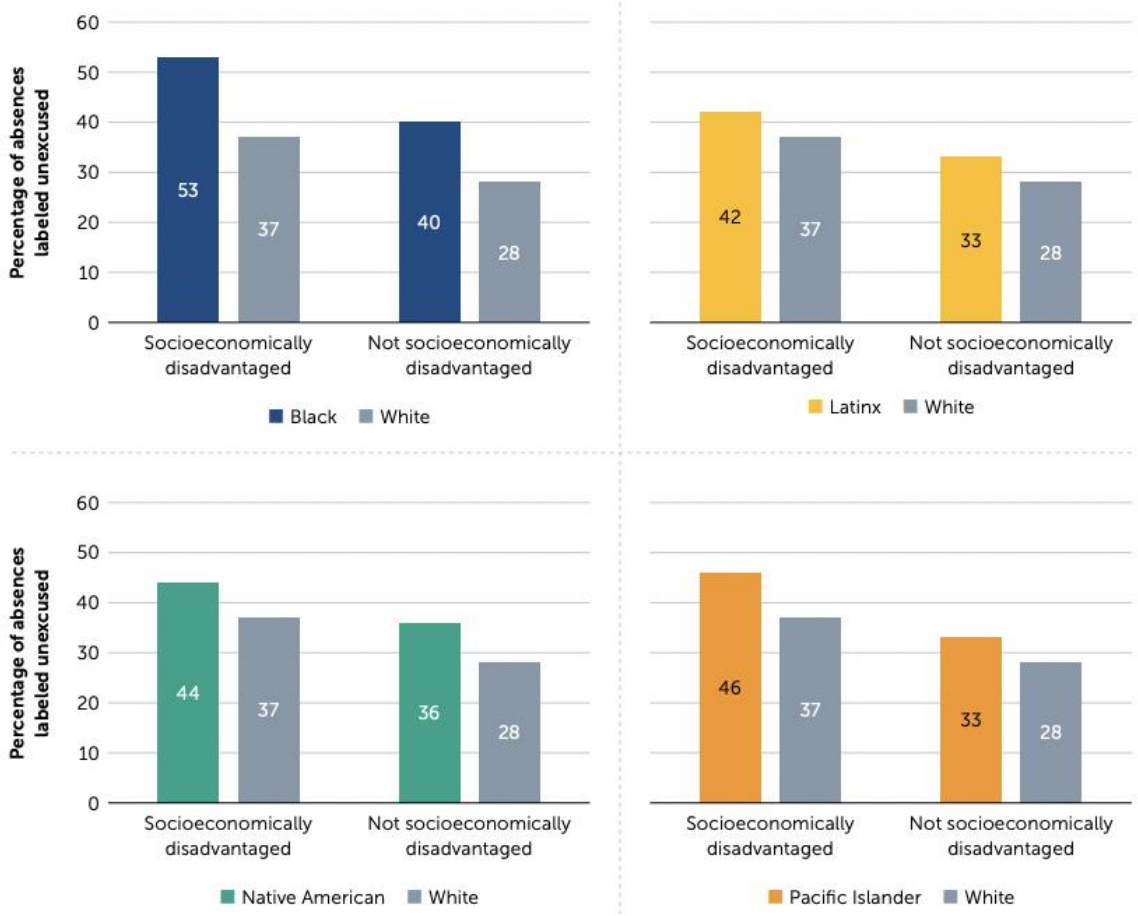
https://www.attendanceworks.org/whats-the-difference-between-chronic-absence-and-truancy/

What is the relationship between absences & gaps?

Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational disparities

Unexcused absences are much higher among socioeconomically disadvantaged students and from communities of color

Figure 6. Racial and ethnic disparities in the percentage of absences labeled unexcused among students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and those who are not, 2021–22



Percent of all student unexcused absences in regular K–12 California schools, by year and student socioeconomic disadvantage.

Large disparities in unexcused absenteeism persisted within each socioeconomic stratum in SY 2021–22 for Black, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic students compared to White students.

McNeely, C., Chang, H., & Gee, K. (2023, March). Disparities in Unexcused Absences Across California Schools. [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education

https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/disparities-unexcused-absences-across-california-schools

Audience Poll

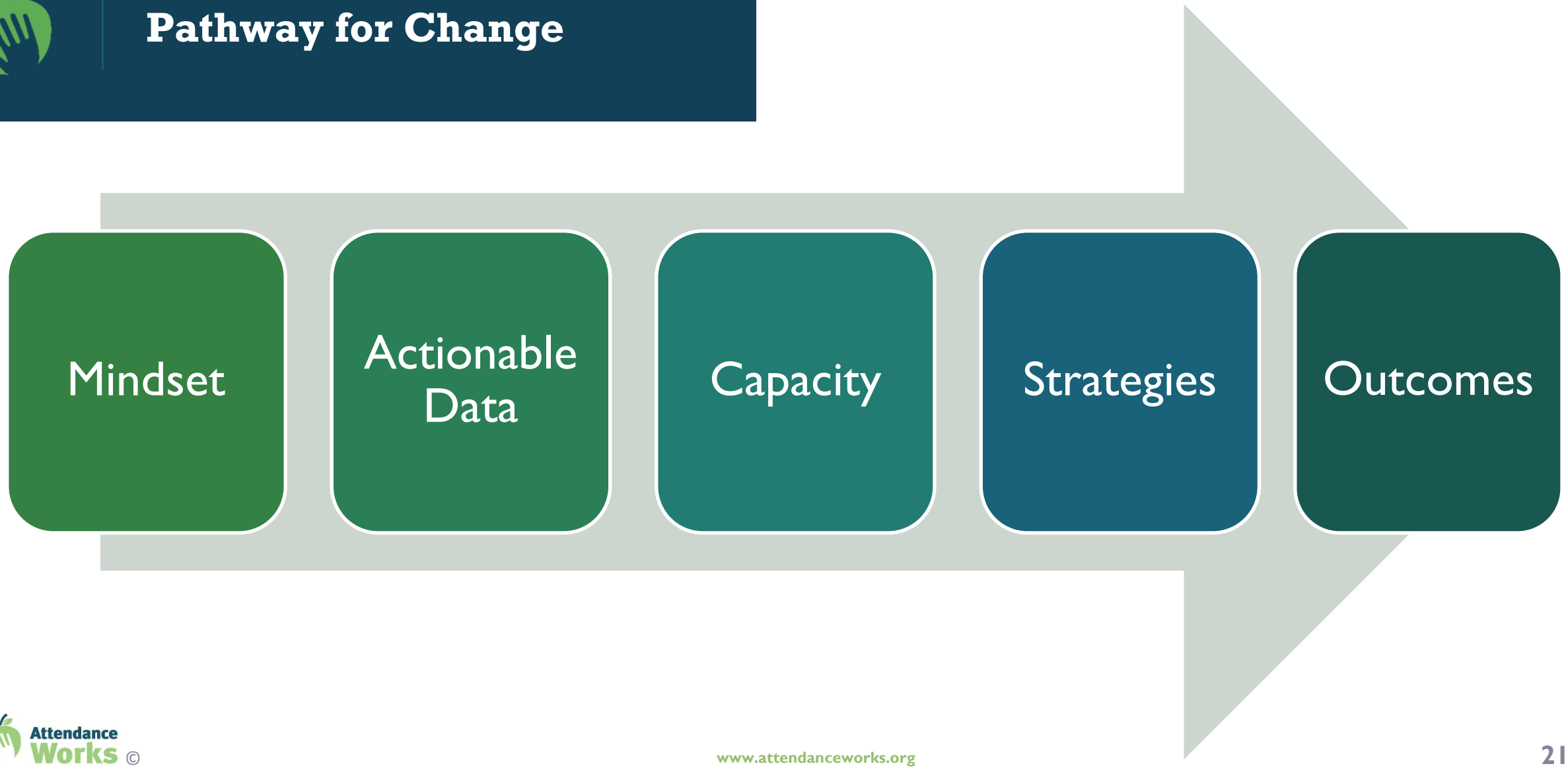
Poll:

How does your school or district respond to unexcused absences?

How "Unexcused" Label Can Affect Response

Response to "Excused"	Response to "Unexcused"
✓ Help with homework	✗ Denial of help or no credit for homework
✓ Make-up exams	✗ No make-up exams
✓ Home tutoring provided	✗ Denial of class credit
	✗ Removal from extracurricular activities
	✗ Send notices of truancy
	**If unexcused absences accumulate despite earlier outreach from schools and districts, courts can:*
	➤ Fine students and parents
	➤ Require a community service program or parenting program
	➤ Charge parents with a misdemeanor

Pathway for Change



Changing the Power Dynamics: Shifting to a Partnership Approach

Problem Focused	to	Partnership Focused
Approach family *only* to address a problem	→	Initial outreach focuses on building a relationship
One-way messaging to families	→	Start with listening to families; Find out hopes, dreams, assets, and needs
Focus *only* on barriers	→	Leverage student/family strengths to overcome challenges
Presume you have all the answers and know what is best for the family/student	→	Collaborate with families and encourage practices that build upon their assets and priorities

These concepts were adapted from this blog by the Search Institute: https://blog.searchinstitute.org/six-shifts-better-family-engagement

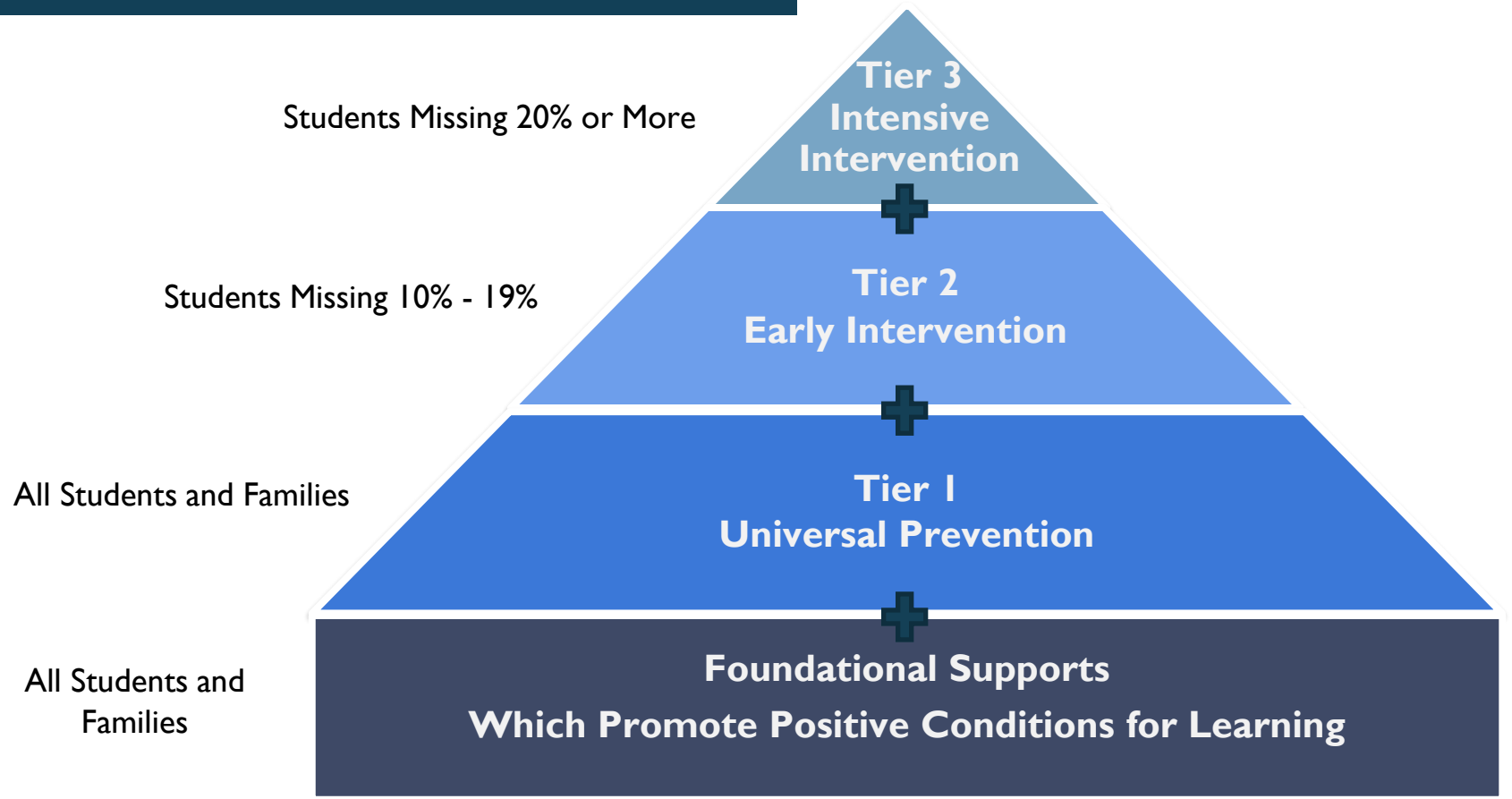
Mindset Reflection

Share in Chat:

What is one typical mindset regarding attendance in your school community that you'd like to shift?

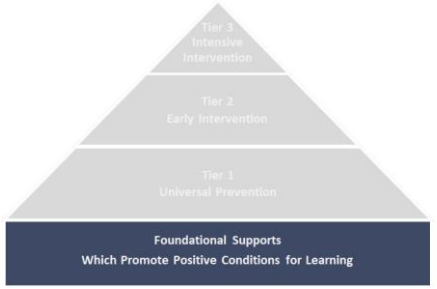
The Key to Improving Attendance is a Tiered Approach

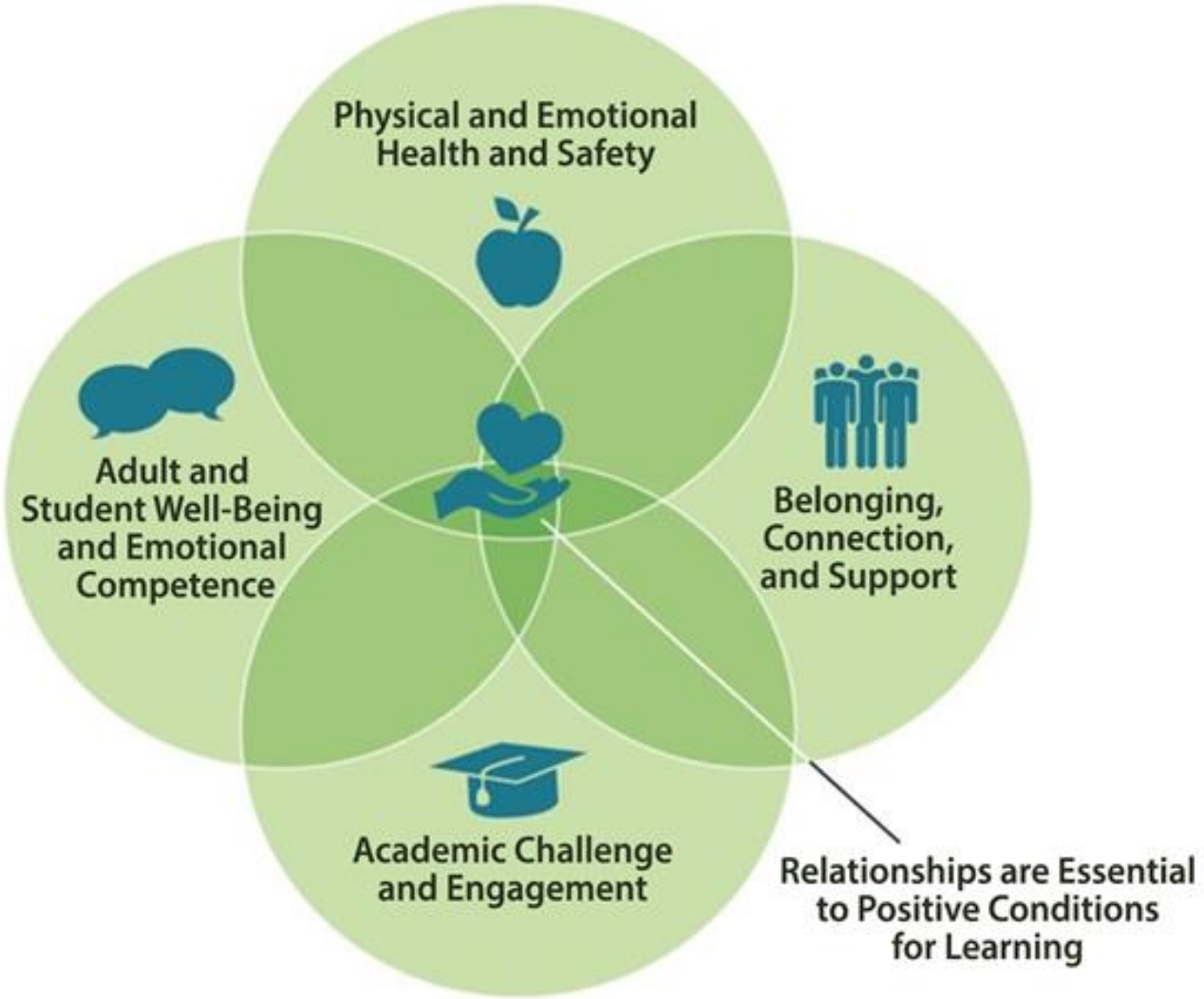
Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



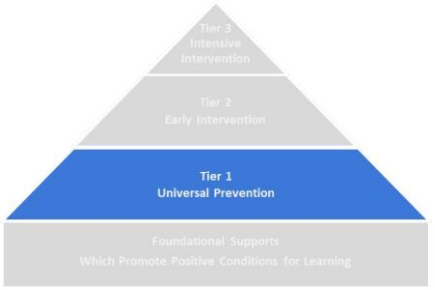
https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/

Positive Conditions for Learning
Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly





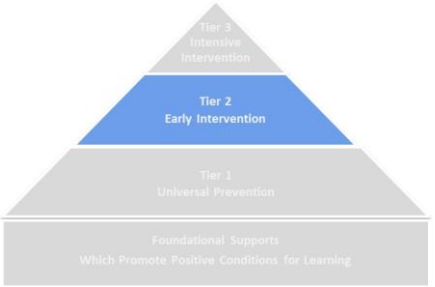
Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports



- Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- Personalized positive communication to families when students are absent
- Recognition of good and improved attendance
- Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- Connection to a caring adult in the school
- Consider adding attendance as a component of ECAPs
- Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

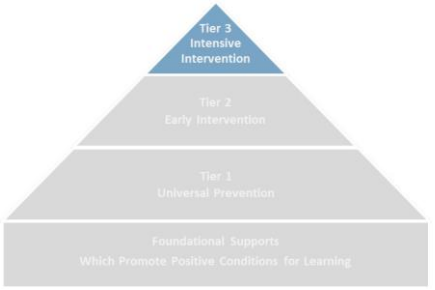
Share in Chat: In your experience, which Tier 1 attendance supports have been most essential at your school or in your district?

Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance



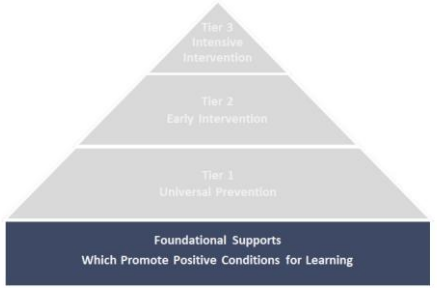
- Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- Attendance strategies added to IEP
- Family visit
- Mentors (e.g., Success Mentors, Peer Group Connections)
- Intensive tutoring
- Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)
- Expanded learning opportunities
- Small group interventions and supports for students
- Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

Tier 3: Intensive interventions

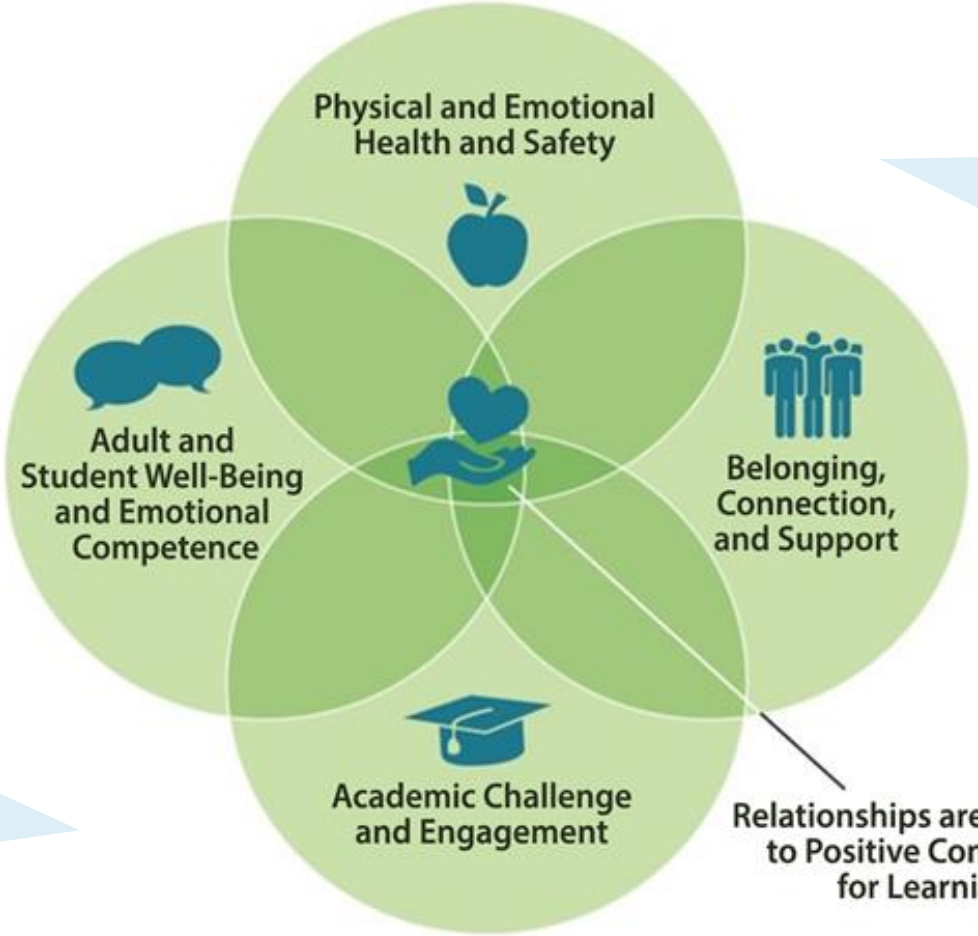


- Educational support champions / advocates
- Interagency case management
- Housing stability supports
- Student attendance review board
- Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation
- Legal Intervention *(as a last resort)*

Positive Conditions for Learning
Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



- *Access to health care & mental health supports*
- *Trauma-informed practice*
- *Staff self-care*



- *Healthy learning environments*
- *Welcoming, safe school climate*
- *Access to food & other basic needs*

- *Access to tech & internet*
- *Learning supports*
- *Project-based learning*
- *Credit recovery opportunities*
- *Internships/community service*
- *Alternative scheduling options*

- *Active student & family engagement*
- *Advisories/meetings to build community*
- *Enrichment & clubs*
- *Positive peer connections*

What promotes positive conditions for learning?

https://youtu.be/oeC2pNcwy1Q

Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?

Positive Conditions: Academic Challenge and Engagement

Type in Chat:

What does it look like when students are completely engaged in their learning?

Strategies to Address Academic Challenge & Engagement

- Individual learning plans and multiple pathways
- Problem-based learning
- Apprenticeships, internships, and community service
- Student-led conferences and capstone projects
- Culturally relevant pedagogy that builds on student strengths and identities

Student engagement	
Attention	Curiosity
Interest	Optimism
Passion	Persistence
Creative problem-solving	

Conditions for Learning:

Belonging, Connection and Support

Poll: Select the conditions you see in your school

Challenging Condition

- ❑ Limited support provided
- ❑ Weak relationships between students and staff
- ❑ Negative peer relationships

Positive Condition

- ❑ Meaningful connection to adults in the school
- ❑ Adults emotionally attuned to students
- ❑ Care and inclusivity
- ❑ Cultural respect and responsiveness
- ❑ Positive peer relationships
- ❑ Equitable, effective and available support

Small Group Discussion

About your school:

- In your experience, what creates a sense of belonging, connection and support in your school?
- How do you reach students and families who've been disconnected?

Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak *(and use the chat to express ideas)*
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter "A" should facilitate.

Report Out

Share in Chat:

What is a strategy you've heard about today that you'd like to strengthen or adopt?

Relationships are Essential at Every Level of Intervention

how-to guide to relationship mapping

MAKING CARING COMMON PROJECT | HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

GRADES
K–12

IMPLEMENTED BY
School Administrators

TIME & RESOURCE INTENSITY
low → high

CAPACITIES PROMOTED
Relationship-building; Student confidence; Shifting school norms

Key Elements

See all students at-a-glance.

A *Relationship Map* lists *all* students in a school (or grade, team, etc.).

See who is well-supported and who needs support by adults.

A *Relationship Map* allows adults in a school to have a quick and visual snapshot of students who are well supported and who most need support. Knowing this, adults can then strategize about how to best reach out to students who most need positive and supportive relationships with adults.

Involve *all* adults in relationship mapping.

A *Relationship Map* is most effective if *all* adult stakeholders with a connection to students participate in its creation. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, sports coaches, mentors, community partners, and other school staff.

Key Benefits

Connect all students to at least one school adult.

A *Relationship Map* helps identify students who do not already have adult connections and provides opportunities for adults in school to build positive relationships with those students.

Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at:

https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy

Re-establish Routines & Rituals

1. **Daily Wellness Check** (e.g. Zones of Regulation, Mood Meter)

2. **Whole Group Greeting** (e.g. Go-around Questions, Circle Games)

3. **Mindfulness/Grounding Exercises** (e.g. Collective Breath)

4. **Greetings at the Door** (e.g. Smile, Call person by name)

Starting Each Class With a Warm Welcome: https://www.edutopia.org/video/starting-each-class-warm-welcome
Making Connections With Greetings at the Door: https://www.edutopia.org/video/making-connections-greetings-door

Evidence-Based Programs

Relational Home Visits

- ✓ Goal is to create positive relationship between educators and parents *before* any issues arise.
- ✓ Example of model programs: Parent Teacher Home Visits http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/
- ✓ Learning Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) Home Visit https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Learner-Engagement-and-Attendance-Program-LEAP

Mentoring

- ✓ Goal is to create positive connection between mentor and student(s) to support student success in school
- ✓ Example of programs: MENTOR, Peer Group Connections, Success Mentor
- ✓ Virtual options for different age groups, https://www.mentoring.org/virtual-mentoring-portals/

Resources for Intentional Relationship-Building

- How to Guide Relationship Mapping guide
  https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy

- 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank
  https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf

- Edutopia – Relationship Building from Day 1
  https://www.edutopia.org/article/relationship-building-day-1

- Search Institute - Relationships Framework https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/developmental-relationships-framework

Strategies and Tools to Communicate About Attendance

Toolkit: Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.

It is an opportunity to…

✓ **Build Routines**

Daily attendance routines can reduce stress and create a sense of safety and security especially after chaotic transitions.

✓ **Increase Engagement**

Being in school helps build relationships with peers and school staff that nurture engagement.

✓ **Provide Access to resources**

Schools provide access to meals, health and mental health services, tutoring, mentoring, technology, extracurriculars (sports, clubs, music, etc.), afterschool and summer programs.

✓ **Support Learning**

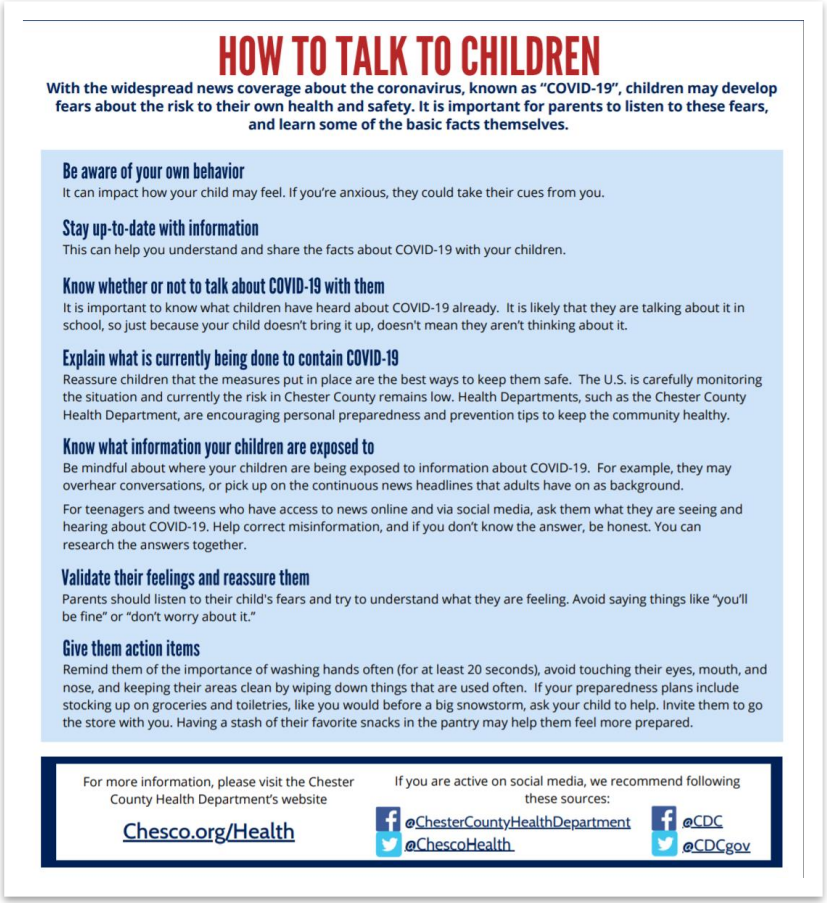
Showing up to school regularly helps students become proficient in reading and math and graduate from high school.

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/

Forging Partnerships with Families to Support Engagement and Attendance

- ✓ Engage in two-way, supportive communications about attendance and engagement throughout the school year
- ✓ Provide tailored, personalized and caring messages to students and families who are chronically absent
- ✓ Offer actionable steps to improve attendance
- ✓ Make sure families receive updated health guidance, resources to meet basic needs as well as as support for learning at home

Effective Communication:
Type in Chat: How do these two flyers differ?



HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN

With the widespread news coverage about the coronavirus, known as "COVID-19", children may develop fears about the risk to their own health and safety. It is important for parents to listen to these fears, and learn some of the basic facts themselves.

Be aware of your own behavior
It can impact how your child may feel. If you're anxious, they could take their cues from you.

Stay up-to-date with information
This can help you understand and share the facts about COVID-19 with your children.

Know whether or not to talk about COVID-19 with them
It is important to know what children have heard about COVID-19 already. It is likely that they are talking about it in school, so just because your child doesn't bring it up, doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it.

Explain what is currently being done to contain COVID-19
Reassure children that the measures put in place are the best ways to keep them safe. The U.S. is carefully monitoring the situation and currently the risk in Chester County remains low. Health Departments, such as the Chester County Health Department, are encouraging personal preparedness and prevention tips to keep the community healthy.

Know what information your children are exposed to
Be mindful about where your children are being exposed to information about COVID-19. For example, they may overhear conversations, or pick up on the continuous news headlines that adults have on as background.

For teenagers and tweens who have access to news online and via social media, ask them what they are seeing and hearing about COVID-19. Help correct misinformation, and if you don't know the answer, be honest. You can research the answers together.

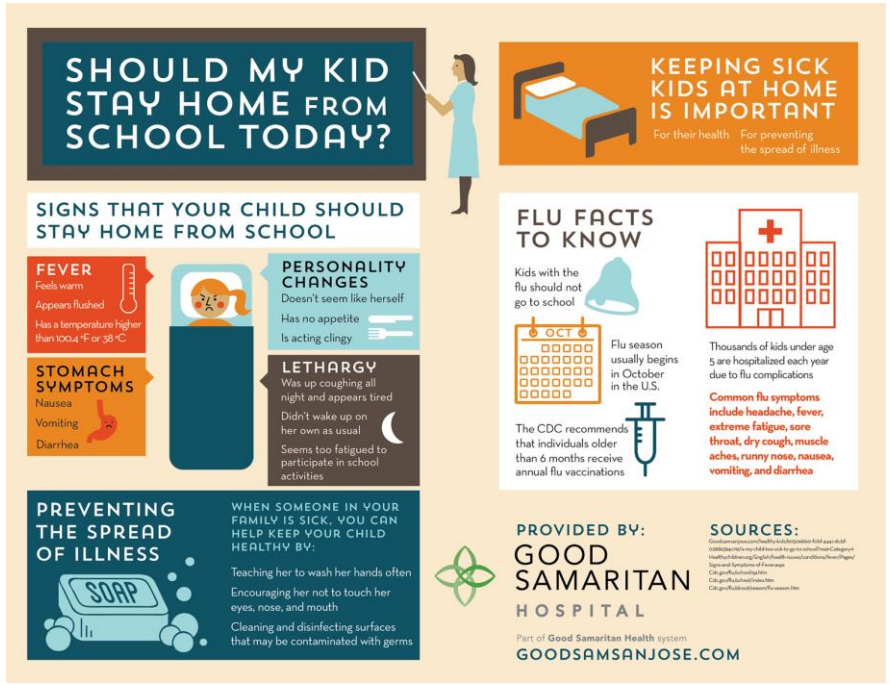
Validate their feelings and reassure them
Parents should listen to their child's fears and try to understand what they are feeling. Avoid saying things like "you'll be fine" or "don't worry about it."

Give them action items
Remind them of the importance of washing hands often (for at least 20 seconds), avoid touching their eyes, mouth, and nose, and keeping their areas clean by wiping down things that are used often. If your preparedness plans include stocking up on groceries and toiletries, like you would before a big snowstorm, ask your child to help. Invite them to go the store with you. Having a stash of their favorite snacks in the pantry may help them feel more prepared.

For more information, please visit the Chester County Health Department's website
Chesco.org/Health

If you are active on social media, we recommend following these sources:
@ChesterCountyHealthDepartment @ChescoHealth
@CDC @CDCgov

Example A



SHOULD MY KID STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

KEEPING SICK KIDS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT
For their health For preventing the spread of illness

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL

FEVER
Feels warm
Appears flushed
Has a temperature higher than 100.4 °F or 38 °C

STOMACH SYMPTOMS
Nausea
Vomiting
Diarrhea

PERSONALITY CHANGES
Doesn't seem like herself
Has no appetite
Is acting clingy

LETHARGY
Was up coughing all night and appears tired
Didn't wake up on her own as usual
Seems too fatigued to participate in school activities

FLU FACTS TO KNOW
Kids with the flu should not go to school
Flu season usually begins in October in the U.S.
The CDC recommends that individuals older than 6 months receive annual flu vaccinations
Thousands of kids under age 5 are hospitalized each year due to flu complications
Common flu symptoms include headache, fever, extreme fatigue, sore throat, dry cough, muscle aches, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS
SOAP
WHEN SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS SICK, YOU CAN HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY BY:
Teaching her to wash her hands often
Encouraging her not to touch her eyes, nose, and mouth
Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that may be contaminated with germs

PROVIDED BY:
GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL
Part of Good Samaritan Health system
GOODSAMSANJOSE.COM

SOURCES:

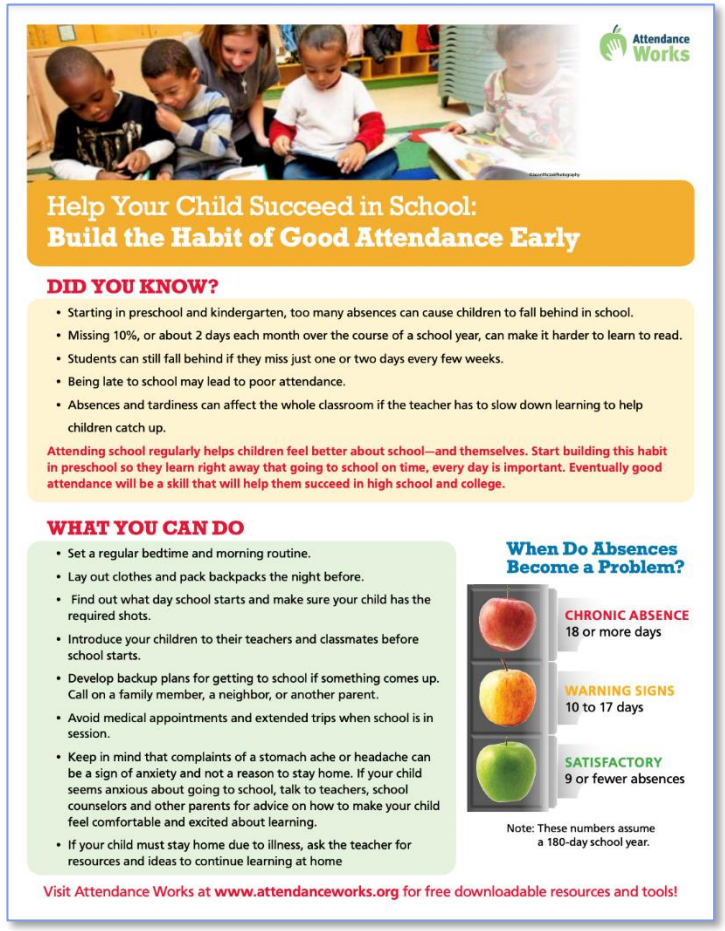
Example B

Additional Resources from Attendance Works

Handouts for Families

- ✓ Preschool, Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole

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



Attendance Works

Help Your Child Succeed in School:
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in preschool and kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences and tardiness can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Eventually good attendance will be a skill that will help them succeed in high school and college.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your children to their teachers and classmates before school starts.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Keep in mind that complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher for resources and ideas to continue learning at home

When Do Absences Become a Problem?

CHRONIC ABSENCE
18 or more days

WARNING SIGNS
10 to 17 days

SATISFACTORY
9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

Visit Attendance Works at **www.attendanceworks.org** for free downloadable resources and tools!

Sign up for the 2023 Attendance Awareness Campaign

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/contact/aam-updates/

Additional Resource on Anxiety

Keep in mind that mild stomach aches or headaches can be a sign of anxiety not illness.

Take steps to address the anxiety rather than keep a child home.

Family Handout about Anxiety

Is your child missing school due to anxiety?

Attendance Works

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.

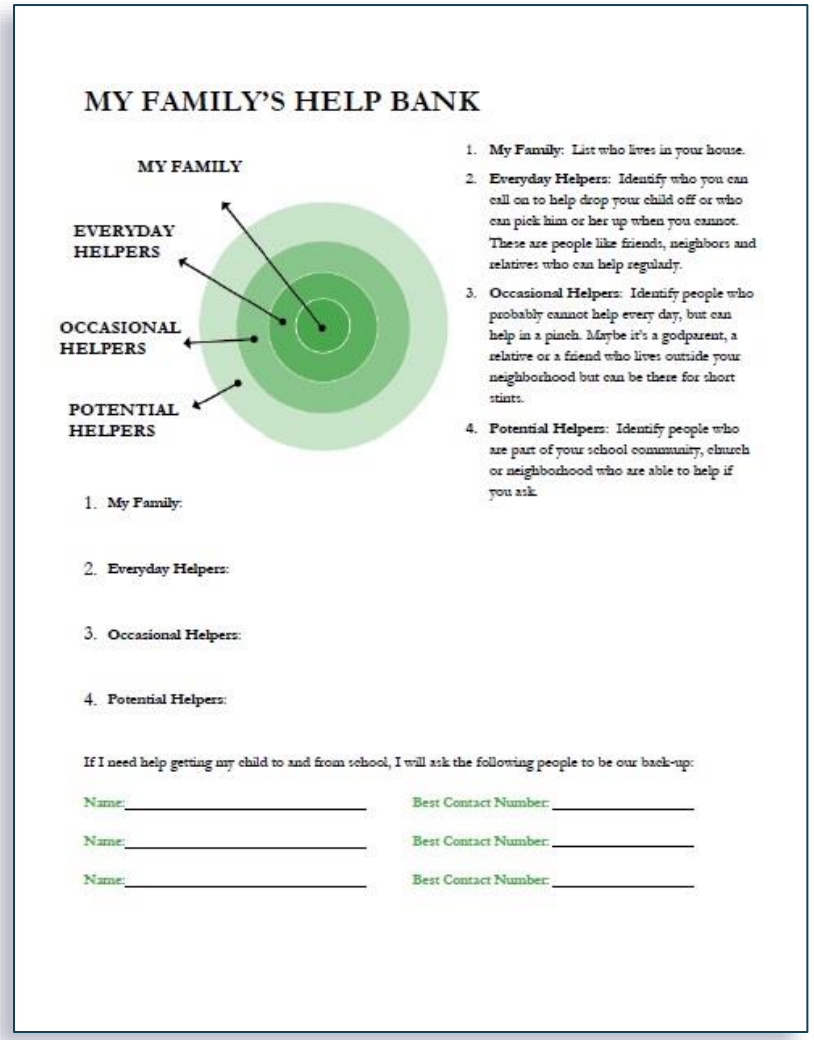
What are the symptoms of anxiety?

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

https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AW_Anxiety_Handout_040723.pdf

Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan



MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

MY FAMILY

EVERYDAY HELPERS

OCCASIONAL HELPERS

POTENTIAL HELPERS

1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help every day, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help if you ask.

1. **My Family:**

2. **Everyday Helpers:**

3. **Occasional Helpers:**

4. **Potential Helpers:**

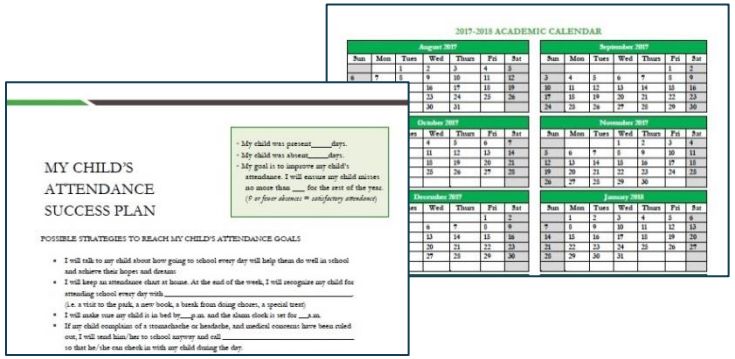
If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

Name:_____ Best Contact Number: _____

Name:_____ Best Contact Number: _____

Name:_____ Best Contact Number: _____

- ✓ Set attendance goals
- ✓ Make backup plans
- ✓ Track absences
- ✓ Recognize success!



2017-2018 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

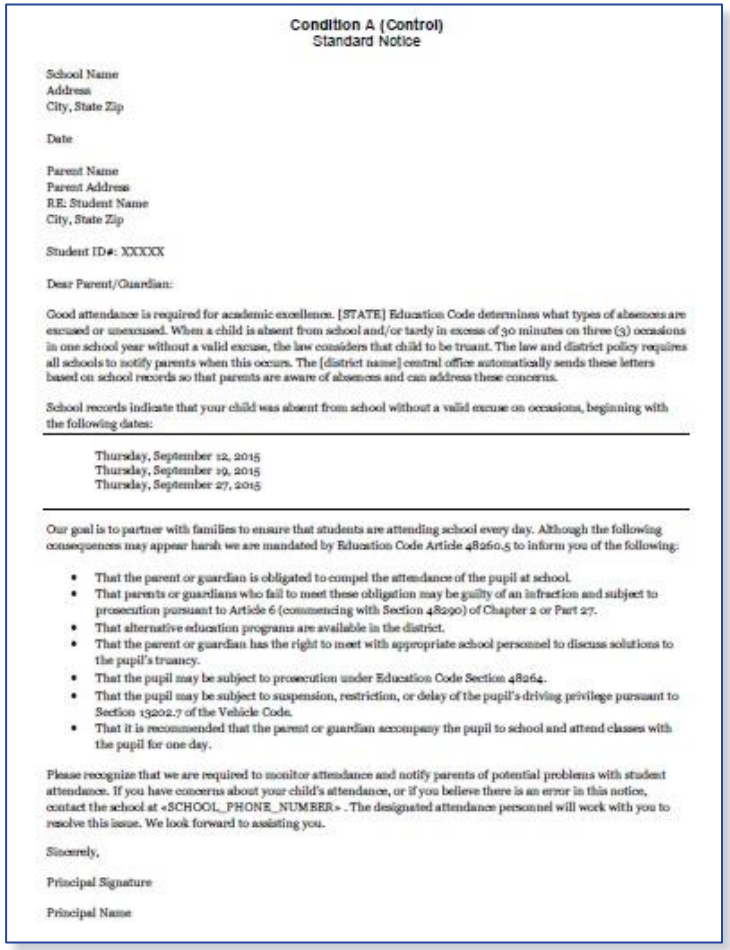
MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/student-attendance-success-plans/

Better Truancy Notifications

- ✓ Started with positive language and moved punitive language to the end
- ✓ Fewer words
- ✓ Written at 5th grade reading level
- ✓ Formatted to help readers skim
- ✓ Makes connection between absences and achievement



Condition A (Control)
Standard Notice

School Name
Address
City, State Zip

Date

Parent Name
Parent Address
RE: Student Name
City, State Zip

Student ID#: XXXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. [STATE] Education Code determines what types of absences are excused or unexcused. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant. The law and district policy requires all schools to notify parents when this occurs. The [district name] central office automatically sends these letters based on school records so that parents are aware of absences and can address these concerns.

School records indicate that your child was absent from school without a valid excuse on occasions, beginning with the following dates:

Thursday, September 12, 2015
Thursday, September 19, 2015
Thursday, September 27, 2015

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students are attending school every day. Although the following consequences may appear harsh we are mandated by Education Code Article 48260.5 to inform you of the following:

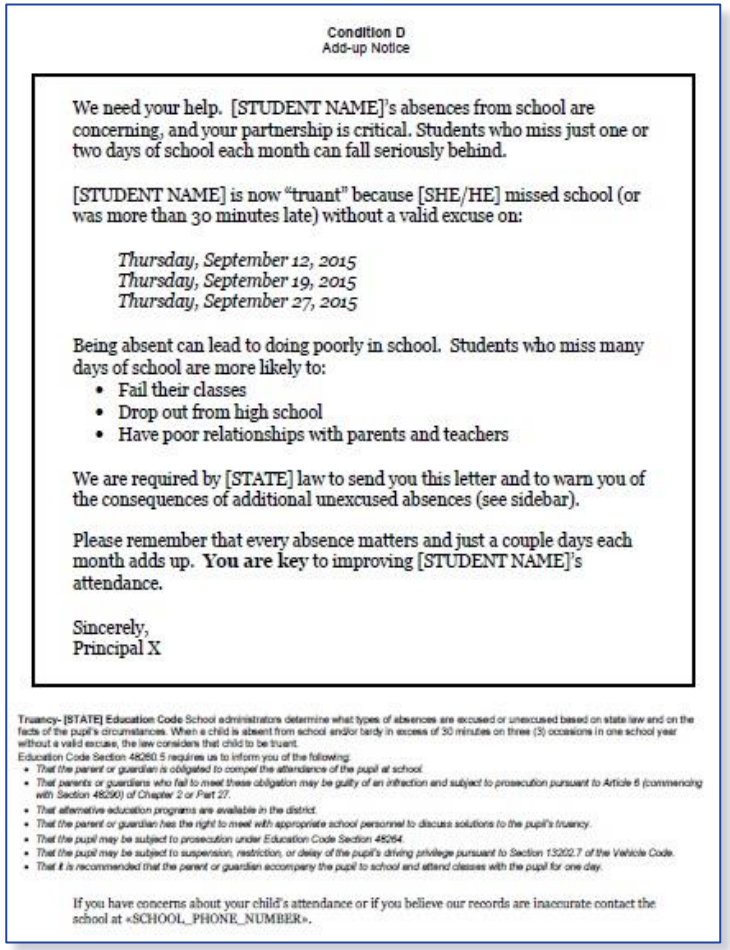
- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, or if you believe there is an error in this notice, contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER» . The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,

Principal Signature

Principal Name



Condition D
Add-up Notice

We need your help. [STUDENT NAME]'s absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

[STUDENT NAME] is now "truant" because [SHE/HE] missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse on:

Thursday, September 12, 2015
Thursday, September 19, 2015
Thursday, September 27, 2015

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by [STATE] law to send you this letter and to warn you of the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see sidebar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days each month adds up. **You are key** to improving [STUDENT NAME]'s attendance.

Sincerely,
Principal X

Truancy- [STATE] Education Code School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.
Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:

- *That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.*
- *That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.*
- *That alternative education programs are available in the district.*
- *That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.*
- *That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.*
- *That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.*
- *That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.*

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER».

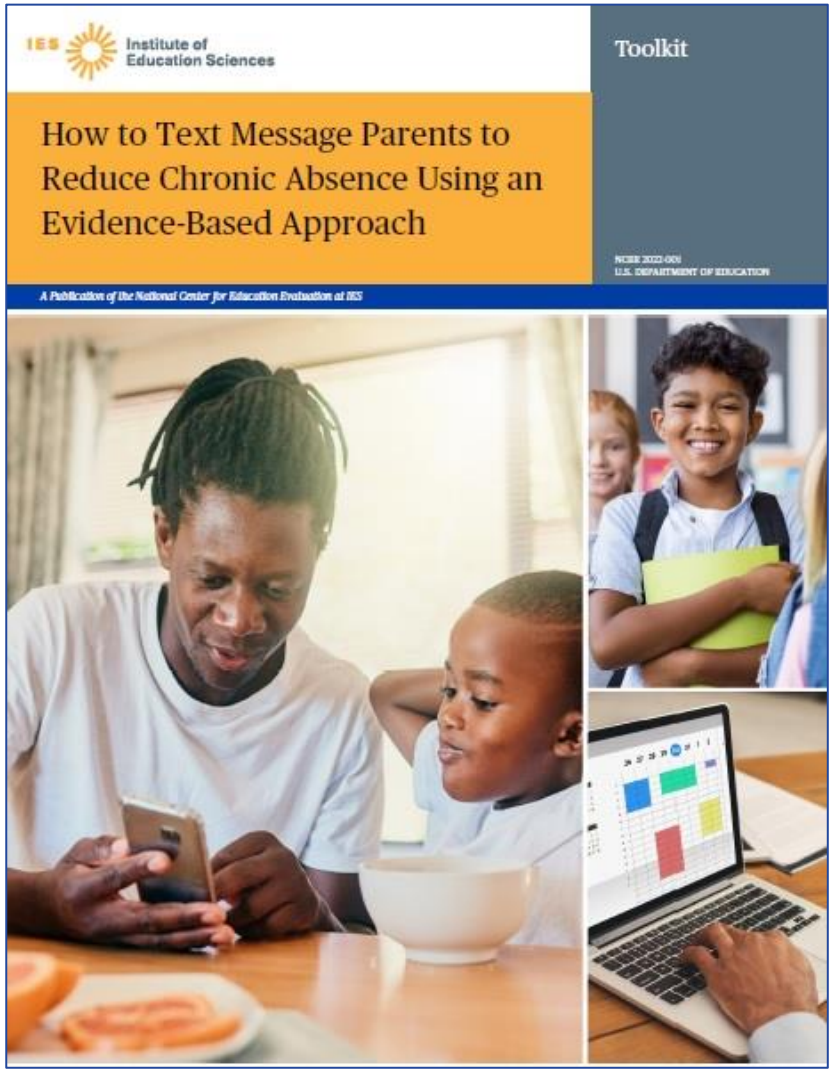
[Writing Truancy Notices That Can Improve Attendance]

[Using Behavioral Insights to Improve School Administrative Communications: The Case of Truancy Notifications]

Communicating with Families

Use these resources to help your communications with families be clear and supportive.

- Letters for Families
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/
- Spring Attendance Dips
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/spring-attendance-slump/
- Strengthen Summer Learning
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/using-r-e-a-l-to-strengthen-summer-learning/
- Stay the Course: Winter Messaging
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/stay-the-course-a-winter-messaging-toolkit/
- Holiday Messaging
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/holiday-messaging/
- How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach
  https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.pdf



Developing a Communications Plan

Identify Your Audience:

- Students
- Families/caregivers
- Teachers
- Community partners

✓ What does each group need to know?

✓ What do you want them to do?

✓ How will you communicate it?

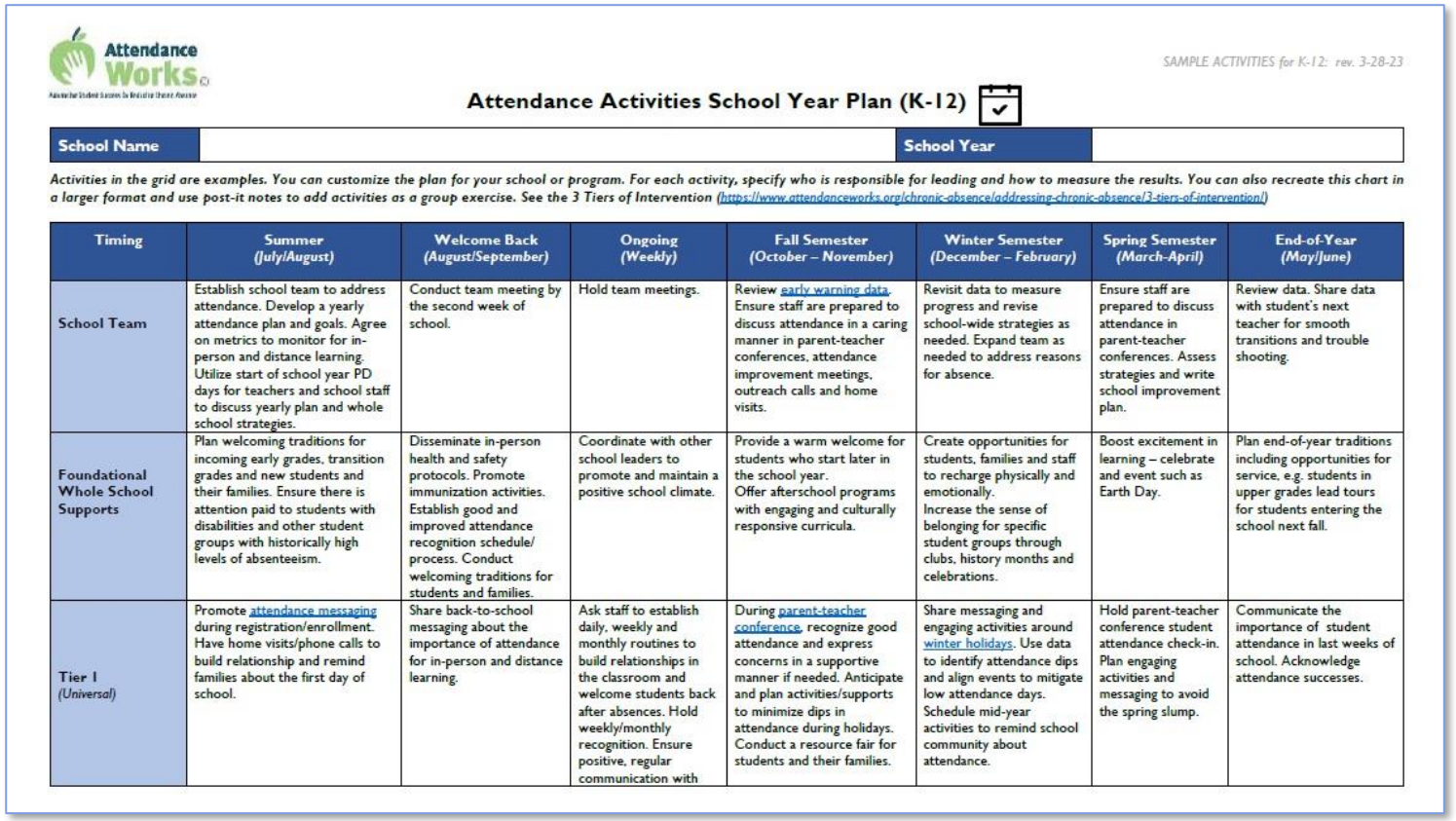
Communications Tips: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/transition-guide/communication-tips-for-your-transition-attendance-plan/

Strategies for Connecting with Students & Families: https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-27-20.pdf

Year-Round Planning

Plan activities and events that keep a focus on improving attendance all year long.

- See sample activities for PreK, K-12 and district teams
- Use blank calendars to customize the plan for your community
- Remember to specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results



Attendance Works

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES for K-12: rev. 3-28-23

Attendance Activities School Year Plan (K-12)

School Name		School Year	

Activities in the grid are examples. You can customize the plan for your school or program. For each activity, specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results. You can also recreate this chart in a larger format and use post-it notes to add activities as a group exercise. See the 3 Tiers of Intervention (https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/)

Timing	Summer (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekly)	Fall Semester (October – November)	Winter Semester (December – February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (May/June)
School Team	Establish school team to address attendance. Develop a yearly attendance plan and goals. Agree on metrics to monitor for in-person and distance learning. Utilize start of school year PD days for teachers and school staff to discuss yearly plan and whole school strategies.	Conduct team meeting by the second week of school.	Hold team meetings.	Review early warning data. Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in a caring manner in parent-teacher conferences, attendance improvement meetings, outreach calls and home visits.	Revisit data to measure progress and revise school-wide strategies as needed. Expand team as needed to address reasons for absence.	Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in parent-teacher conferences. Assess strategies and write school improvement plan.	Review data. Share data with student's next teacher for smooth transitions and trouble shooting.
Foundational Whole School Supports	Plan welcoming traditions for incoming early grades, transition grades and new students and their families. Ensure there is attention paid to students with disabilities and other student groups with historically high levels of absenteeism.	Disseminate in-person health and safety protocols. Promote immunization activities. Establish good and improved attendance recognition schedule/ process. Conduct welcoming traditions for students and families.	Coordinate with other school leaders to promote and maintain a positive school climate.	Provide a warm welcome for students who start later in the school year. Offer afterschool programs with engaging and culturally responsive curricula.	Create opportunities for students, families and staff to recharge physically and emotionally. Increase the sense of belonging for specific student groups through clubs, history months and celebrations.	Boost excitement in learning – celebrate and event such as Earth Day.	Plan end-of-year traditions including opportunities for service, e.g. students in upper grades lead tours for students entering the school next fall.
Tier I (Universal)	Promote attendance messaging during registration/enrollment. Have home visits/phone calls to build relationship and remind families about the first day of school.	Share back-to-school messaging about the importance of attendance for in-person and distance learning.	Ask staff to establish daily, weekly and monthly routines to build relationships in the classroom and welcome students back after absences. Hold weekly/monthly recognition. Ensure positive, regular communication with	During parent-teacher conference, recognize good attendance and express concerns in a supportive manner if needed. Anticipate and plan activities/supports to minimize dips in attendance during holidays. Conduct a resource fair for students and their families.	Share messaging and engaging activities around winter holidays. Use data to identify attendance dips and align events to mitigate low attendance days. Schedule mid-year activities to remind school community about attendance.	Hold parent-teacher conference student attendance check-in. Plan engaging activities and messaging to avoid the spring slump.	Communicate the importance of student attendance in last weeks of school. Acknowledge attendance successes.

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/year-long-planning/

Questions from the Audience

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on whole school strategies to create
  - positive conditions for learning and
  - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism
- Understand what chronic absence is and why it matters
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance

Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj

Thank you!

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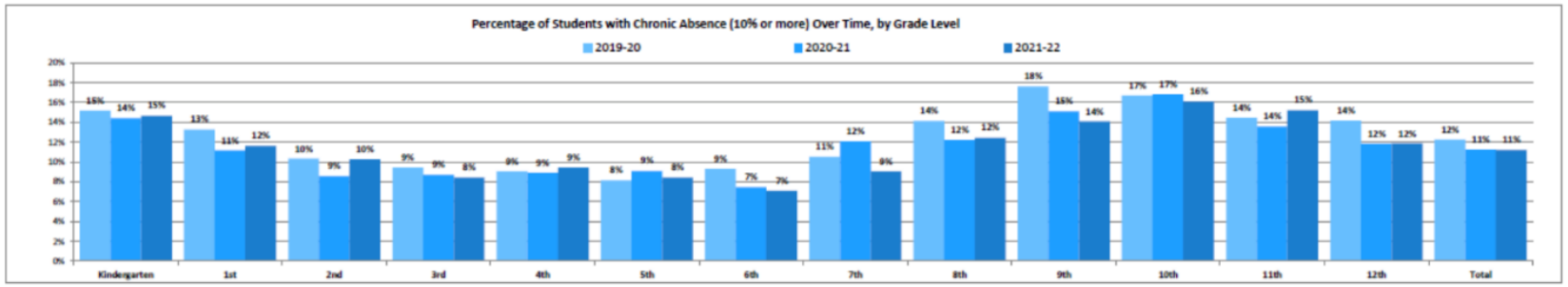
About Us

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

Appendix



UPDATED! Data Tracking Tools

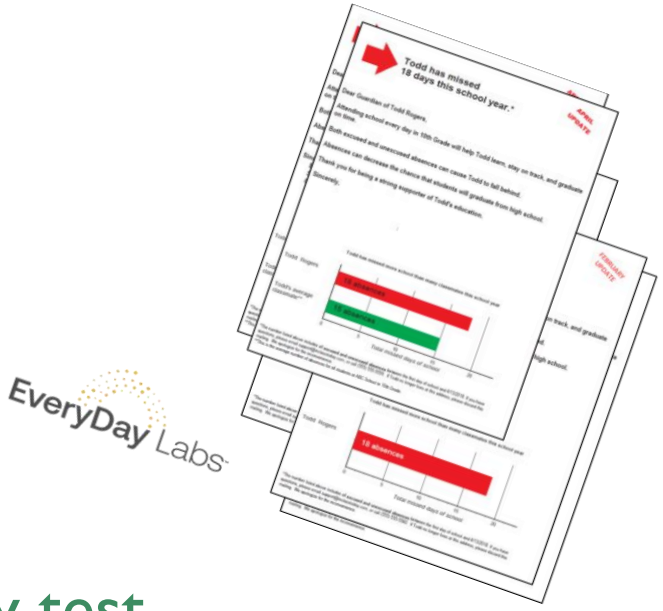
What? Attendance Works District and School Attendance Tracking tools

Why? These tools will help you analyze your local data. This version now captures information about students experiencing extreme chronic absenteeism (missing 50% or more of school).

When? Before the new school year begins is an excellent time to examine who was chronically absent last year.

Find it here: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/data-tools/calculating-chronic-absence/

Utilize Research about Effective Attendance Messaging to Improve Your Communications



1. Readable
    - Fewer words
    - Accessibility: Flesch-Kincaid readability test
    - Skimmability: bullets, format reinforces message
2. Programmatic
    - Planned *(personalized to audience)*
    - Timely
    - Routinized
3. Easy to locate and multiple modes

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